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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS OF THE NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY-MAOIST (NCP-M) IN NEPAL: A COMPARISON OF MAOIST INSURGENCIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by

Shantosh B. Poudyal

December 2010

Thesis Co-Advisors: Michael Malley
Anshu Chatterjee

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The dramatic rise and relative political success of the Nepal Communist Party-Maoist (NCP-M), calls into question the conventional explanations for the success or failure of violent Maoist insurgencies in the current global environment. The Nepalese insurgency ended in relative triumph through a negotiated political settlement that co-opted its major demands. Furthermore, the Maoists scored an impressive electoral victory that marked the beginning of a process of complete transformation of the traditional sociopolitical structure of Nepal. By comparing the failed Maoist insurgencies of the Shining Path of Peru and the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (CPP/NPA) with the NCP-M, this thesis offers an alternative explanation that links the nature of approach taken by a Maoist insurgency to the outcome. The thesis argues that, in order to succeed, an insurgency must first shed the ideological dogma and its emphasis on violent means because of the limits and constraints in executing classic Maoist people's war in the twenty-first century. Instead, they should focus on exploiting political opportunities created by initial military gains while popular support remains high. This thesis also highlights the benefits of employing political negotiations and foreign mediation as a genuine means for achieving both political change and sustainable peace.

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EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS OF THE NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY-MAOIST (NCP-M) : A COMPARISON OF THE MAOIST INSURGENCIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
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ABSTRACT

The dramatic rise and relative political success of the Nepal Communist Party-Maoist (NCP-M), calls into question the conventional explanations for the success or failure of violent Maoist insurgencies in the current global environment. The Nepalese insurgency ended in relative triumph through a negotiated political settlement that co-opted its major demands. Furthermore, the Maoists scored an impressive electoral victory that marked the beginning of a process of complete transformation of the traditional sociopolitical structure of Nepal. By comparing the failed Maoist insurgencies of the Shining Path of Peru and the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (CPP/NPA) with the NCP-M, this thesis offers an alternative explanation that links the nature of approach taken by a Maoist insurgency to the outcome. The thesis argues that, in order to succeed, an insurgency must first shed the ideological dogma and its emphasis on violent means because of the limits and constraints in executing classic Maoist people's war in the twenty-first century. Instead, they should focus on exploiting political opportunities created by initial military gains while popular support remains high. This thesis also highlights the benefits of employing political negotiations and foreign mediation as a genuine means for achieving both political change and sustainable peace.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CGTP	General Confederation of Workers of Peru
CNL	Christians for National Liberation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPI-M	Communist Party of India—Maoist
CPN-UC	Communist Party of Nepal - Unity Center
CPP/NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines / New People's Army
FPTP	First Past the Post
GNI	Gross National Income
ICG	International Crisis Group
IU	Izquierda Unida (the United Left)
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
MLM	Marxism-Leninism-Maoism
NCP-M	Nepal Communist Party—Maoist
NDF	National Democratic Front
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PKP	Partido Komunista Ng Philipnas (Philippine Communist Party)
RIM	Revolutionary International Movement
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
SUTEP	Teachers Labor Union
UML	United Marxist—Leninist
UPFN	United People's Front, Nepal
U.S.	United States

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I. THESIS PROPOSAL

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

During the Cold war, the Soviet Union and China supported left-wing insurgencies in developing nations to spread communist ideologies. Many such insurgencies were inspired by the strategy of "people's war" adopted by Mao and his Chinese Communist Party. Communist ideology started to lose its appeal in the late 1980s, and, following the demise of the Soviet Union, communist regimes across the world started to fall. Simultaneously, Chinese modernization and a shift toward economic liberalization led to the decline of Maoism in China. Interestingly, Maoist insurgencies in general did not lose their significance as a potent method for political change. Despite the end of the cold war, Maoist strategies remained attractive to several groups around the world, especially in Asia.

Nepal is one place where, despite an unfavorable international environment, a Maoist insurgency under the leadership of the Nepal Communist Party-Maoist (NCP-M) began in 1996, gained strength in the next 12 years, and ultimately succeeded in heading the national government in 2008. While the NCP-M could not defeat the government forces or displace the old establishment completely, it did succeed in making sure that the government accommodated their most important demands: abolition of the two-century-old monarchy, election of a constituent assembly to draft a new democratic constitution, and the adoption of federalism. The NCP-M took control of the government in Nepal after securing the largest number of seats in the Constituent Assembly election in 2008. The NCP-M led the government even though the United States still listed the party on the Terrorist Exclusion List.[1] Although the government led by the NCP-M stepped down in 2009 after a failed attempt to sack the Army chief, the party's tremendous success in transforming the country's political system remains a puzzle for many analysts.

[1] Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, "Terrorist Exclusion List," March 16, 2009, U.S. Department of State, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/des/123086.htm (accessed June 5, 2010).

The mystery is more interesting because similar movements in other parts of the world do not seem to be enjoying such success. The Shining Path of Peru started its armed struggle modeled along the Maoist doctrine in May 1980. The insurgency quickly spread across the nation and was able to effectively challenge the state. However, the insurgency collapsed following the capture of its leader, Dr. Ruben Abimael Guzman Reinoso, alias Gonjalo, on September 12, 1992. Mark Chernick states that by the late 1980s support for the Shining Path had "vanished and it was faced with a social rebellion against its brutal methods, militarism, and ideological demands."[2] The insurgency failed to achieve its goals and, interestingly, ended in military defeat and social rejection and not in negotiations, because the Shining Path never entered into negotiations or talks.[3]

Similarly, the Communist Party of the Philippines and its New People's Army (CPP/NPA) started an armed rebellion in 1969 after becoming disgruntled with the inadequate political gains of the original Communist Party of the Philippines (the PKP). The new party was led by Jose Maria Sison and based almost entirely on Mao's doctrine of peasant-based mass revolution.[4] The movement gathered strength with the election of Ferdinand Marcos as president in 1969. Marcos was forced to call elections in 1986 following the political unrest created by the assassination of Benigno Aquino, Jr.[5] However, the CPP decided to boycott the election, which gave the advantage to Mrs. Corazon Acquino, widow of Mr. Aquino, who gained power by ousting Marcos. The boycott of the 1986 elections by the CPP/NPA and continued persistence with an armed movement resulted in the loss of popular support that was crucial to its success. Unlike the NCP-M, who seized political opportunity by participating in the interim government in 2007 and participating in elections in 2008, the CPP/NPA neglected the opportunity for political participation.

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[2] Mark Chernick, "PCP-SL: The Defeat of Sendero Luminoso," in *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts*, eds. Marianne Heiberg, Brendan O'Leary, and John Tirman, 231 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[3] Ibid., 291.

[4] Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 18.

[5] Ibid.

Both the Shining Path and CPP drew inspiration from Marxism and Maoism and waged similar forms of people's war. All three cases, including the NCP-M, share similarities in terms of having fulfilled most of the prerequisites for an insurgency to be successful: availability of a cause to fight for, active popular support, geographical conditions conducive to the conducting of insurgency operations, a weak state government, active external assistance, and an informational advantage.[6] However, the Shining Path and CPP both failed after making initial gains, whereas the NCP-M succeeded in achieving its objectives. In this context, what explains the relative success of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal under the leadership of the NCP-M as compared to the failure of the other Maoist insurgencies?

B. IMPORTANCE

In the modern world, communist insurgencies are not expected to succeed because communist ideology in general has lost the ability to motivate people in most places. The twenty-first century insurgents face many difficulties. They have difficulty in recruiting, organizing, and fighting superior armed forces of the government and can no longer be confident of external support. As J. Bowyer Bell argues, "The assets of the state are so apparent, so compelling, and so easy … and the prospects of the rebel are so faint, that only the most optimistic risk an armed struggle."[7] Contrary to such observations, insurgencies have continued to grow in parts of the world.

The success of the NCP-M-led Maoist insurgency is alarming because of its possible influence on other insurgent groups across the world. One example is that of the Indian Maoist insurgents who have recently intensified their violent campaign against the Indian state. Thus, it is important to identify the reasons for the success of Maoists in Nepal so that these reasons can help in formulating counterinsurgency strategies in India and elsewhere.

---

[6] Frank H. Zimmerman, "Why Insurgencies Fail: Examining Post World War II Failed Insurgencies Utilizing the Prerequisites of Successful Insurgencies as a Framework" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2007), 1–10.

[7] Bowyer, J. Bell, "The Armed Struggle and Underground Intelligence: An Overview," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 17, (August 1994): 115–150.

If the growth of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal around the turn of the century is in defiance of "several layers of conventional wisdom about politics and society," its political success is astounding.[8] The violent campaign waged by the NCP-M in Nepal ended after it signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the government in November 2006. The CPA and subsequent agreements led to the co-option of major political demands of the NCP-M, and the NCP-M went on to win the post-war elections for the constituent assembly. This unique journey of the Nepalese Maoist insurgency highlights the importance of a balanced application of classical military methods combined with a realistic political approach. Hence it is of deeper academic value for both the scholars and practitioners of counterinsurgency.[9]

This case is also important from the point of view of the role foreign actors can play in ending an insurgency. The historic 12-point agreement of November 2005 that brought the NCP-M closer to the democratic parties was facilitated by the Indian government. Indian facilitation and mediation was crucial in the conclusion of the Delhi pact that led to the peace process.[10] Additionally, the involvement of the European Union, United States, and United Kingdom was also helpful.

This study assumes significance in the current global context because of the enmeshed nature of terrorism and insurgency. While terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda wage transnational insurgencies, domestic insurgencies are drawing important lessons from international terrorist organizations. Under these circumstances, it becomes necessary to connect the two disciplines. The case of the Nepalese Maoist insurgency is important to study because the insurgents extensively employed terrorist tactics before coming to power at the state level.

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[8] Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," in *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty First Century*, eds. Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, 3–23 (Kathmandu: Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 2010).

[9] R. Andrew Nickson, "Democratization and the Growth of Communism in Nepal: A Peruvian Scenario in the Making," in *Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal*, ed. Deepak Thapa, 3–9 (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari Publications, 2003).

[10] Bishnu Raj Upreti, "External Engagement in Nepal's Armed Conflict," in *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari, 219–235 (Kathmandu: Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 2010).

The Nepalese case is unique because of the NCP-M's openness to participating in the political process. While the NCP-M was actively pursuing armed action against the state, it also left the political option open. The Maoists always claimed their readiness to enter into substantial dialogue with the government during their violent campaign. In 2001, only five years after it began its insurgency, the NCP-M entered into formal and serious dialogue with the government. This feature is not apparent in the other two cases (the Shining Path and CPP/NPA), where the military approach remained dominant. In the end, it was through the political process that the NCP-M achieved its political objectives. This case demonstrates the limited utility of the military-dominant approach and emphasizes the need for a balanced politico-military approach to insurgency in the current global context. It is, however, noteworthy that negotiation and political participation become meaningful only at a certain point of time, especially when the parties reach the stage of stalemate. Thus identification of the right moment for political settlement is of critical value.

Furthermore, by highlighting the impracticality of the classical military-dominant Maoist approach in the current global context, this study contributes to the conflict de-escalation effort. The case presents important policy implications for governments and agencies involved in conflict prevention and counterinsurgency operations. It is equally useful in answering the question facing "diplomats, practitioners of conflict resolution, and scholars on how to bring a conflict to an early end before more blood is shed, money squandered, and opportunities lost."[11] Additionally, it cautions against the possible resurgence of left-wing, particularly Maoist-inspired, armed movements in various parts of the world including India, the Philippines, and Peru.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

I argue that the success of the NCP-M in an increasingly unfavorable domestic, regional, and global situation can be explained by its willingness to adopt a political approach over a military one. Although the party's development was based upon the

[11] Mariannne Heiberg, Brendan O'Leary, and John Tirman, eds. *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2.

classic Maoist "people's war" doctrine, its leaders were ready to accept political negotiation and political participation as a genuine means for achieving their main objectives. This explains why the Shining Path and CPP/NPA's dogmatic military approach directed toward overthrowing the incumbent regime by the use of extreme violence met with failure and the flexibility of the Nepalese Maoists in pursuing a politically-accommodating approach saw success.

It is, however, equally important to identify when and whether the insurgents are truly willing to negotiate. The political process can be effective only when there is a possibility of achieving a genuine political solution, which is preceded by clear and unambiguous demands. Veronique Dudouet argues that political engagement with (insurgent/terrorist) groups is desirable only under certain circumstances. First, the group should be interested in having a political solution, and, second, it should be seen as the legitimate representative of the community. Third, it should be able to deliver a peace agreement, and, last; political engagement with the insurgent group should generate significant behavioral change.[12] The Nepalese Maoists had very clear political demands for electing a constituent assembly to draft a republican constitution, which made it easy to negotiate with them. This was very different from the abstract and utopian goals in other cases. The NCP-M also commanded a degree of legitimacy because of its indigenous and inclusive composition.

The NCP-M was continually involved in the negotiation process even while the military action continued. There were two major formal negotiations conducted between the Maoists and the government in 2001 and 2003. Although both the talks were failures, they established the foundation for future agreements. This process of simultaneous political and military action is completely absent in the case of the Shining Path, which was never willing to negotiate.[13] Similarly, the CPP/NPA also refused to participate in

[12] Vernonique Dudouet, "Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups," *Special Report*, No. 239, United States Institute of Peace, May 2010: 1–5.

[13] Nischal Nath Pandey, *Nepal's Maoist Movement and Implications for India and China* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005), 91.

the elections in the 1950s and 1980s and chose to continue its armed struggle.[14] The Nepalese Maoists have been criticized as revisionists for abandoning the people's war for parliamentary politics, which makes them appear non-Maoist on the surface. But, as we shall see, they alone seem to completely grasp what Mao emphasized so much; the importance of politics.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Insurgency in its simplest form can be called a militant political movement. The U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24 defines it as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."[15] The newly expanded definition by the U.S. Department of the Army states that "an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power or other political authority while increasing insurgent control … insurgents use all available tools, political, informational, military, and economic … to overthrow the existing authority."[16]

The expanded definition of insurgency ably encompasses the multifaceted dimension of an insurgency and rightly points toward the politico-military nature of insurgency. It can be waged for various purposes, ranging from the demand for more political rights, self determination, and national liberation or sociopolitical transformation. The Maoist insurgency is a socialist revolutionary insurgency and thus differs from the others primarily in its ideological motivations and the protracted form of people's war that it practices.

Among militant socialist revolutionary strategies, two successful approaches appear in history. The October Revolution led by Lenin in 1917 was an urban insurrection centered in the capital city and carried out with the organized support of the

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[14] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contemporary Philippine Leftist Politics in Historical Perspective," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippines Politics After 1986*, ed. Patricio N. Abinales, 11 (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996).

[15] U.S. Army Field Manual, FM, 3–24, *Counterinsurgency*, U.S. Department of Defense, 1.

[16] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, April 12, 2001, as amended through November 9, 2006), 267.

trade unions, student and other groups, and even a section of the security forces. This insurrection needed to be swift, commanding the support of almost every section of society and effective in quickly replacing the government.[17] Theoretically, this type of strategy demands a "revolutionary situation" where conditions are just right and the communist party can be the vanguard to lead the masses into the revolution.

The other successful approach was adopted by Mao Tse Tung in China (1920–49) and followed by Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam (1946–54). They approached revolution through the strategy of "people's war." Looking into the environment of China where the proletariat working class was nearly absent, Mao concentrated on the peasantry and focused on the capture of rural areas.[18] Mao advocated a strategy of encircling the cities by first capturing the countryside. He designed a people's war strategy, which is conducted in a three-phased protracted form of warfare divided into Strategic Defense, Strategic Stalemate, and Strategic Offense.

Many studies have been carried out on the Maoist form of insurgency because of its spectacular successes in China and Vietnam. These studies attempt to explain the "nature of Maoist insurgency" based upon the interpretation of the writings of Mao and other Maoist leaders and through case studies of insurgencies. Samuel Griffith makes a literary translation of the works of Mao and Mao's theory on the means of the insurgency.[19] Donald W. Hamilton explains it as a "method" and a "type" of warfare adopting the "protracted war strategy."[20]

While the general tendency to explain a Maoist insurgency as a military-dominated strategy persists, there are some who argue the opposite point of view, that it is politically-dominated. Thomas A. Marks points to the pitfalls of focusing strictly on the military aspect of Maoist doctrine because the Maoist insurgency for him is primarily

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[17] Douglas S. Blaufarb and George K. Tanham, *Who Will Win? A Key to the Puzzle of Revolutionary War* (New York: Crane Russak, 1989), 6–8.

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel Griffith (Chicago: First Illinois Paperbacks, 2000).

[20] Donald W. Hamilton, *The Art of Insurgency: American Policy and the Failure of Strategy in Southeast Asia* (Westport: Praeger Publishers Inc., 1998).

a political movement using multiple lines of operation in which violence is just one.[21] Similarly, Bard O'Neill categorizes insurgencies into "anarchists, egalitarian, traditionalist, pluralist, secessionist, reformist, and preservationist" because of the nature of their goals rather than the methods they use. He puts Maoist insurgency in the egalitarian category and calls it a political phenomenon.[22] This exposes the conflict in the understanding of Maoist insurgency in terms of its approach.

Two distinctly different perspectives on the nature of Maoist insurgency appear from the literature; one takes a military-dominant approach, treating it as a form of warfare, while the other takes a politically-dominant approach. Since Maoist doctrine remains one of the most successful of the militant, social-revolutionary strategies based upon a "people's war," there appears to be a stronger case in favor of the primacy of politics.[23] Marks argue that Mao stated that all insurgencies are strategically political and directed operationally through multiple lines of operation.[24] Similarly, Blufarb and Tanham argue that among the strategies of the Maoist, first is the priority of politics, meaning the supremacy of political organization over the armed element. They claim that Mao followed the Clausewitzian principle that "war is a continuation of politics by other means." Then comes the popular support; for the Maoists, everything they do (including the military campaigns) is to achieve popular support, thus the emphasis is on the sociopolitical mobilization of the population for which terrorism and persuasion are employed.[25]

This leads to the argument that, because of the reluctance to understand the nature of Maoist insurgency as a political strategy reliant upon violent methods, the counterinsurgency efforts are undermined in some cases. This also implies that if the insurgents lose track of their political priorities and get entangled in the process of violence alone, then success is most likely to elude them.

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[21] Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam* (New York: Taylor and Francis Inc., 1996).

[22] Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington: Brassey's Inc., 1990).

[23] Blaufarb and Tanham, *Who Will Win?*, 6–8.

[24] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 335–337.

[25] Ibid., 339.

The rest of the literature that analyzes the success or failure of insurgencies takes a variety of approaches. One faction believes the framework of traditionally-identified prerequisites is necessary for the success of an insurgency. David Galula considers a cause to fight for, geographic condition, outside support, and weakness of the state as the prerequisites.[26] Julian Paget emphasizes support from the local populace, mobility, and supplies.[27] Theda Skocpol contends that the international environment is one of the major factors that contributes to the success or failure of revolutions.[28] Mahendra Lawoti and Anup Pahari use the evaluation of the socio-economic environmental conditions combined with the role of leadership, influence of ideology and effectiveness of strategy as the framework for analyzing the success of the Nepalese Maoists.[29]

Some even consider the approach of the counterinsurgent state as the factor that determines success or failure of the insurgency. Daniel Byman adds that the success or failure of a (proto) insurgent movement depends only in part (and at times only in small part) on its own campaign. The reaction of the state is often the most important factor in a movement's overall success. In particular, states can disrupt organizations through various forms of policing and repression and can co-opt potential leaders and make them allies of the state.[30] Marks and David Scott Palmer also point out that insurgents are unlikely to win on their own, and their victory is based upon a series of "inappropriate and erroneous policies" of the state that is countering them.[31]

Timothy J. Lomperis states that, in revolutionary insurgency, the incumbents and insurgents unquestionably struggle for power and authority over their people. Thus, he

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[26] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (London: Praeger, 1968), 5, cited by Zimmerman in *Why Insurgencies Fail?* 1–5.

[27] Julian Paget, *Counter-Insurgency Campaigning* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 11.

[28] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 19–24 quoted in Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 7.

[29] Lawoti and Pahari, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," 3–23.

[30] Daniel Byman, "Understanding Proto Insurgencies," occasional paper, *Counterinsurgency Study*, no. 3 (RAND, National Defense Research Institute: 2007), 6–7.

[31] Thomas A. Marks and David Scott Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 2006): 8.

argues, “Insurgencies are won or lost by the relative amount of legitimacy the two competing sides achieve.”[32] Highlighting the difference in approaches taken by the insurgents, he argues that “the mobilization of people’s war is exclusive in its drive for a monopolistic seizure of power, whereas power sharing and compromise is called for by democrats.”[33] If the incumbents can take the risks of including insurgents in elections then people’s war as a strategy is either preempted or co-opted.”[34] In summary, he argues that political participation is the best method to end insurgencies.

Since every insurgency has a different context, in addition to the common variables, certain idiosyncratic conditions pertaining to the particular case or cases usually are instrumental in tipping the outcome in favor of insurgent groups or against them. Therefore, these conditions are considered crucial in explaining each particular case.

Marks argues that most Maoist insurgencies are unsuccessful because they fail to advance simultaneously along the multiple lines of effort outlined by Mao. These lines of effort are violence without politics, the winning of allies outside the movement, the use of nonviolence to make violence more effective, and the garnering of international support.[35] Marks also recognizes that the integral nature of violence in all phases of insurgency, but he cautions that it is “used to the situation to eliminate resistance so that insurgent politics can produce mass and resource mobilization.”[36] Thus, he again emphasizes the value of the political approach and the simultaneous use of political and military means for success.

O’Neill argues that the use of political resources and instruments of violence in accordance with a carefully crafted strategy are the main determinants of insurgent success. He argues that any strategy used by the insurgents that can maximize the

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[32] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People’s War to People’s Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 6.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 56.

[36] Ibid.

effectiveness of the political and military techniques employed will achieve success. He elaborates that the strategy adopted will vary according to six variables, "environment, popular support, organization, unity, external support and the government response."[37] Here O'Neill has emphasized the need to have a political strategy that is able to marshal the available elements considered to be the prerequisites of success.

Despite the prescribed factors and importance of politics, insurgencies adopt various approaches as they deem them suitable to their specific conditions. To achieve success they must adapt continually to the ever-evolving environment around them. Fixation with prescribed and historical models may lead them to failure, whereas realistic assessment and selection of appropriate means are more likely to lead to success. Thus, the approach taken by an insurgency becomes important to the outcome of the insurgency.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

I will employ the comparative method to determine the reason for the success of the Nepalese Maoist insurgency led by the NCP-M as opposed to the failure of similar Maoist insurgencies in Peru and the Philippines. I will broadly compare the factors and strategies considered to be prerequisites for insurgent success. I will attempt to track the general trend and inclination of the party ideology and political objectives, and I will also analyze the main strategies employed by the insurgencies in order to determine the predominance of military only or a balance of politico–military in their overall approach. This will be executed by identifying elements of political flexibility in terms of willingness for dialogue and negotiation or participation in elections, if there are any, by the insurgents.

While comparing the Shining Path and the CPP/NPA with the NCP-M, I will illustrate that despite similarities in environmental factors and successful employment of traditional and prescriptive methods, the other two failed due to their overemphasis on a dogmatic adherence to ideology, a lack of tangible political objectives, an overemphasis on the military means, and an inaccurate assessment of regional and global situations.

[37] O'Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, 57.

The Nepalese Maoist insurgency, on the other hand, succeeded because of their balanced politico-military approach. I will use both primary as well as secondary data for this purpose.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is divided into five parts. The introductory chapter covers the contextualizing background, the research question, literature review, and the hypothesis. The second, third, and fourth chapters will consist of the comparative case studies of the Shining Path, the CPP/NPA, and the NCP-M; first, for the analysis of factors considered to be prerequisites for success, and then specifically for the approach taken by the insurgencies: military only or a combination of political and military. The impact that the approach taken has on the outcome of the insurgency will be analyzed. The final chapter will conclude with observations and lessons for future counterinsurgency, conflict de-escalation, and conflict termination.

The thesis will highlight the impact of effectively employing or ignoring political negotiations as a genuine means for achieving political success for insurgent groups. In the twenty-first century, the execution of the military-only approach may not be successful. This was demonstrated by the fate of the Shining Path and the CPP/NPA. Persuading incumbent political forces to co-opt and accommodate their major political demands may be strategically more feasible and effective. I will demonstrate how the NCP-M, after creating conducive conditions by the use of traditional military strategies, was able to succeed in achieving its political objectives by retaining and exercising flexibility toward a negotiated political settlement that co-opted and accommodated its demands and led to its rise to power.

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II. THE SHINING PATH (SENDERO LUMINOSO) OF PERU

A. INTRODUCTION

The Shining Path or the "Sendero Luminoso" stands out as an exception to Che Guevara's dictum that it is not advisable to start an insurgency against an elected government, for the masses will choose the electoral alternative. [38] The Shining Path waged an armed insurgency against a democratically elected government and, more interestingly, was able to rise very quickly through a combination of well-targeted framing of the grievances of the poverty-stricken Peruvian peasants and the coercive power of extremely violent armed action. However, the Shining Path failed as quickly as it rose within about 10 years of the beginning of its campaign. Its failure is worthy of analysis because of the connection between its rigid adherence to Maoist ideals leading to a military dominant approach that inhibited its ability to exploit political opportunities and the outcome of the movement.

In this chapter, I will show that the movement failed because its leaders refused to engage in pragmatic politics as well as the sort of violent struggle that Mao advocated. This is unlike the situation in Nepal, where the Maoists used a flexible strategy that I will explain in Chapter IV. The Shining Path leadership failed to exploit the political opportunities created by the success of its military strategy, which would have allowed it to establish an alternative state. The insurgency continued to rely upon a campaign of terrorist violence that threatened to bring down the Lima regime through military defeat instead of consolidating its political gains in a timely fashion. Because of this the movement collapsed once its leader was captured.

Does this mean that Maoism has become ideologically bankrupt or Mao's strategy of "people's war" has become any less applicable or impracticable in the current conditions? Or is it simply that the true ideals of Maoism and Mao's strategy were

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[38] Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, Understanding Failed Revolution in El Salvador: A Comparative Analysis of Regime Types and Social Structures," *Politics and Society,* 17:4, December 1989, 511–537 quoted in Cynthia McClintok, "Theories of Revolution and the Case of Peru," ed. David Scott Palmer, *The Shining Path of Peru,* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) 242–254.

misunderstood or misinterpreted by its practitioners, and that this led them to adopt inflexible positions that ignored the domestic and international context? Or is it a case of an ideological dogma that drove the notion of making a "true Maoist revolution" as envisioned by its leader Guzman that ignored "politics" in pursuit of the "war"? [39]

In this chapter I will compare the Shining Path's approach to some critical variables of insurgency that are considered to be the minimum prerequisites for the success of an insurgency. These variables include adherence to ideology, clarity of political objectives, leadership and organization, popular support, and external support. While analysis of the above-mentioned factors may provide a guide for understanding the Shining Path's failure, they do not adequately explain the difference between its failure and NCP-M's success. The major difference between the two becomes clear from the analysis of the overall approach taken by the two on conducting an insurgency. The assessment of leadership will focus on the inclination of the leadership toward a particular strategy and approach at various points in time and the level of flexibility demonstrated. Similarly, a study of ideology will help us understand the value attached to the military or political components and the position of negotiation, politics of alliance, and electoral participation in the overall insurgency scheme. A summary of the analysis will lead to the identification of the insurgent approach (military only or politico-military) to explain its impact on the final outcome.

B. BACKGROUND

The Shining Path was born in the impoverished highland area of Ayacucho, which has an estimated population of over half a million people.[40] Guzman, a professor of philosophy, started the movement in the 1970s. Guzman's political career started when he joined the Communist Party of Peru in 1964. He left the party after the Sino-Soviet rift and adopted Maoist ideals. The organization took about 10 long years of preparation under Guzman before it turned into a violent movement in 1980. It carried out various

[39] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 253.

[40] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," 91–110.

attacks during the presidential elections to make its mark on Peru's political scene.[41] The insurgency spread rapidly in the 1980s. Within a decade, it had not only caused $10 billion in property damage and over 20,000 deaths, but it almost threatened to take over the government in Lima. [42]

Interestingly, the movement grew during an extended period of economic growth and government expansion, particularly in public education and rural development initiatives.[43] By the late 1980s it had emerged as a very powerful insurgency that could topple the Lima regime. The Shining Path had already expanded throughout the country. Its organization was divided into seven regional committees, all with their own separate annihilation squads and popular committees of sympathizers. The movement had already established various liberated zones where their finance committees worked openly collecting "people's taxes," which was believed to be at least $10 million every year.[44] The level of Sendero's presence across the country, combined with the ability of its guerillas to operate with relative freedom, the amount of funds it was able to raise, the level of social control it could exercise on the populace through coercion, and the growing strength of its political organization all indicated its capability to challenge the Peruvian state.

In 1992, President Alberto Fujimori's *autogolpe* (Self coup) against his own government presented the Shining Path with a political opportunity. With its nationwide presence, the finances it had secured, and its large infrastructure within the capitol, the Shining Path leadership became convinced that it was on the verge of triumph hence began to plan for the final offensive.[45] They were to affect the collapse of the government through a campaign of "generalized violence, gradual encirclement of the cities and

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[41] Jo-Marie Burt, *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru: Silencing Civil Society* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007), 1–22.

[42] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," 91–110.

[43] David Scott Palmer, *The Shining Path of Peru*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 2.

[44] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," 98.

[45] Ibid., 100.

establishment of the new democracy."[46] It planned to carry out multiple violent attacks in the month of October 1992 to "shake the country to its foundations" followed by a year-long violent attack that would bring the government "to its knees" by the end of 1993 in order to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Mao's birth.[47] However, the plan could not be carried out because Guzman was captured by the specialized police intelligence unit (National Counterterrorism Agency) in September 1992. The Shining Path's mistake was in not identifying the method it would use to capitalize on the opportunity presented by the unpopular coup.

The arrest marked the beginning of a downhill trend for the Shining Path. Guzman's arrest was followed by the subsequent capture of other main leaders and over 3,500 members of the party over the next year. This resulted in the dismantling of the insurgency infrastructure.[48] The level of political violence also declined in 1993 by nine percent and more sharply in 1994.[49] Guzman later appealed for peace negotiations with the government through a letter to President Alberto Fujimori indicating the level of decline the organization had suffered. Currently, the Shining Path still continues to operate in Peru but at a lesser scale and with limited impact on national security or politics. Although observers do not discount the possibility of a revival of the movement, the Shining Path has ceased to be a movement that could threaten the Peruvian state.

C. GRIEVANCES THAT LED TO THE INSURGENCY

The uniqueness of the Shining Path insurgency lies in the fact that it was able to exploit economic grievances as the major catalyst to incite the revolution. It is also true that without a strong organization with a firm ideological belief that could convince the population of economic and sociopolitical deliverance, economic grievances alone would not have been sufficient. Looking at the extremely difficult terrain and the level of abject poverty of the area, the insurgency by some is considered to be a "logical outgrowth of its

[46] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," 100.

[47] Ibid., 2–3.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

environment."[50] Similarly, the political repression that continued from the limited civilian democracy (1895–1919) throughout the military regimes (1968–1980) leading up to the Fujimori period also helped radicalize the masses.

Although Cynthia McClintok agrees that "anger of repression or poverty is not a sufficient condition" of insurgency, there is no denying that economic conditions in rural Peru were still not satisfactory.[51] There existed a general trend of rampant inflation, a decline in the production of goods and services, a loss of jobs, a decline in living standards, and a frustration among the rural and poor populace that created a much-needed setting for the insurgency. She argues that the ability of the Shining Path, as an efficient insurgent organization, to channel this economic crisis led to the growth of insurgency.[52] Marks counter argues that neither Peru's economic or political conditions were such that they would provoke an insurgency.[53] According to him, the economy was recovering, a democratic government had returned after a long military rule, and an extensive agrarian reform was being carried out with the help of the Soviet Union.[54] However, while the government was trying to improve economic conditions, it is difficult to assess whether they were having any significant impact.[55]

Ton de Wit and Vera Gianotten believe that the "cultural dislocation" followed by the displacement of various native ethnic groups by other ethnic groups during the expansion of the Inca empire resulted in a "cultural trauma" and continued conflict between the communities.[56] This situation also assisted in creating an environment that

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[50] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," 96.

[51] Cynthia McClintok, "Sendero Luminoso in Comparative Perspective," 3, http://www.cholonautas.edu.pe/modulo/upload/lasaclintock.pdf (accessed on August 20, 2010).

[52] Ibid., 32.

[53] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam,* 280.

[54] Ibid.

[55] According to the statistics maintained by the EIU (Economic Intelligence Unit), the growth rate of the GDP of Peru in 1980 was 3.04. This rose to 10.0 in 1986 but fell to -8.70 in 1988 and -11.70 in 1989. Similarly, its GDP per capita in 1980 was 2,569, which rose to 2,643 in 1987 but fell to 2,047 in 1988 and 1,905 in 1989. These figures indicate that the economy was doing relatively well until 1986/87. http://www.ieej.or.jp/egeda/general/info/pdf/Per.pdf (accessed October 20, 2010).

[56] Ton de Wit and Vera Gianotten, "The Center's Multiple Failures," in *The Shining Path of Peru,* ed. David Scott Palmer, 63–77 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

was conducive for the growth of the insurgency. Another dimension is presented by the huge gap between the urban and the rural. This is characterized by an acute neglect of the outlying areas and the rural peasant population combined with the government's often "indiscriminate and excessive military response." This situation antagonized the population, a sentiment that was exploited by the Shining Path for further radicalization of the masses and recruitment. The Shining Path successfully framed these grievances in a Maoist ideological framework and continued to mobilize.

D. IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

Ideology is considered to be the primary driver of a revolutionary social movement, and it derives force from its utility for mass mobilization. The Shining Path preached the purest form of Maoism because Guzman believed that true Maoism held the key to the revolution. He said "to be Marxist today, to be communists, necessarily demands that we be Marxists-Leninists-Maoists and principally Maoists. Otherwise we could not be genuine Maoists." Similarly, he believed that Maoist ideology is the only one capable of transforming the world and must be adhered to for the revolution.[57] His strong belief in Maoist doctrine guided the party's strategy toward adoption of a rigid line of action.

But, on the other hand, he also emphasized the need to apply the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the concrete conditions of Peru, which indicated that he was not completely averse to the idea that the practice of Maoism could differ contextually. In contrast to what Guzman said, in reality the Shining Path practiced Mao's people's war to the extent of fanaticism. Gustavo Garriti summarizes the nature of the Shining Path by saying that "it wages its revolutionary war according to Mao's people's war doctrine, preserves its orthodox course through regular purging rituals and

[57] Comrade Gonzalo, interview by Peruvian newspaper El Diario, www.blythe.org/peru-pcp/docs_en/interv.htm, July 1988 at an undisclosed location (accessed July 27, 2010).

maintains unity through a personality cult of gigantic proportions."[58] This confirms the inflexible approach adopted by the insurgency in regards to the application of Maoism or the people's war strategy on the ground.

Chernick argues that the Shining Path adopted a "fundamentalist Marxist historical materialism that consisted of a closed diagnosis and circular analysis with little disposition for debate, with a vision that was inconsistent with reality but that was expressed as being based on scientific and universal truths." [59] The insurgency operated along Lenin's vanguard principle and used violence as the primary instrument for achieving political power. The rigidity of the Shining path's ideology benefitted the insurgency in the beginning as it gathered credence among the population that was wary of the corrupt leaders from the conventional left. But the same ideological rigidity later became an obstacle to the process of making rational political decisions or strategic decisions.

The Shining Path considered all other left-wing movements to be revisionary. Guzman abhorred the other communist and socialist parties and believed that they were trying to substitute Marxism with bourgeoisie philosophy. He considered combating revisionism more important than fighting imperialism. He opposed even the "Soviet socialist imperialism of Gorbachev" and "China's revisionism of Deng."[60] He thus considered the Shining Path to be the "fourth sword of Marxism" and advocated complete social change through violence.

The amount of emphasis given to violence by the insurgency led critics to conclude that "Sendero has an ideology, to destroy society in order to build a new society, they don't want to modify. It is easier to build anew than to change the existing thing."[61] This might be the reason why despite being a Maoist insurgency, it is also considered a terrorist organization. Gordon H. McCormick and some others argue that

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[58] Gustavo Garriti, "Shining Path's Stalin and Trotsky," in *The Shining Path of Peru*, ed. David Scott Palmer, 169 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

[59] Chernick, "PCP-SL: The Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Peru," 301.

[60] Gonzalo, interview.

[61] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 259.

among others, it is "by far the largest and most successful of Peru's terrorist organizations and it reveals a number of organizational and ideological features that are quite unique." [62] He identifies three distinct characteristics about the Shining Path. First, the unique ideological combination of Andean mysticism, Maoism, and the world view of its leader Guzman, second, it's unmatched "fanaticism and extreme parochialism," and last, simple ruthlessness.[63]

Radical adoption of Maoist ideology in its purest form and rejection of other socialist parties as revisionist left the Shining Path with little possibility of adopting a political approach. Similarly, the influence of violent Leninist methods in its strategy and a cult-like organizational hierarchy made the party take up the modus operandi of a terrorist-like organization rather than an insurgent organization pursuing tangible political objectives. Such dogmatic views on ideology, scorn for other communists, and an emphasis on violence possibly explains the inherently inflexible nature of the Shining Path. This helps explain its negative approach toward legitimate political opportunities.

The Shining Path rarely issued communiqués and press statements about its demands, goals, and objectives. Only two texts describing its objectives and a rare interview by Guzman himself in September 1986 exist.[64] The Shining Path's stated goal was the creation of a "new state of workers and peasants" or the "new democracy."[65] It drew heavily from the work of Jose Carlos Mariategui, who believed that the original basis of Peruvian socialism lay in the pre-Columbian peasant community or the idea of native, agrarian communism.[66] Guzman himself indicated that the goal of the insurgency was to mount a general uprising that would in turn bring about the collapse of urban society and destroy the government in Lima. [67] There were, however, no details on what

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[62] Gordon H. McCormick,"The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," in *Inside Terrorist Organizations*, ed. David C Rapoport, 109 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[63] Ibid., 112.

[64] Ibid., 116.

[65] Ibid., 113.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Sandra Woy Hazleton and William A. Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democracy," *Third World Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (April 1990): 230.

should replace the old structure. It only stated that the national market economy, the banking system, industry, and all foreign trade should be abolished and a communal, village-oriented economy based upon the barter system should be established.[68] It was difficult to comprehend how to implement such economic measures even if the movement succeeded in coming to power.

While the operations carried out by the Shining Path were largely confined to Peru, it also had some international goals. According to Guzman, the scope of the insurgency would expand to encompass other nations of Latin America in the future as well. Thus it can be said that its goal was not only to overthrow the regime in Peru but also to create the beginnings of a Latin American revolution for a new socialist system.

With the limited texts and references outlining its objectives, it is clear that the Shining Path, like some other Maoist insurgencies, wanted to capture state power in order to establish the "dictatorship of the proletariat," but it is difficult to make out what alternative structures and institutions it wanted to establish. This ambiguity in political and institutional objectives remained one of the problematic aspects of the insurgency. The insurgency clearly lacked clarity in its political objectives. The Shining Path never clearly articulated its' political objectives in the form of structures and institutions that would replace the old ones.

Additionally, the declared goals of the Shining Path can best be described as vague and utopian. Had it identified its objectives clearly in terms of the desired institutional, political, social, and economic changes, it would have been possible for the movement to combine political and military strategies. The dogmatic execution of people's war, the vague nature of the political goals, the use of extreme violence, and the isolationist policy of the Shining Path made political negotiation, alliance formation, and the creation of a united front extremely difficult. Under these conditions, the movement faced two outcomes: either win militarily or perish.

[68] Hazleton and Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future," 114.

E. POPULAR SUPPORT

Many analysts believe that the movement failed because, at the latter stage, it lost the support of the same social base that helped its rise. Chernic argues that while the populace supported the Shining Path's actions against village enemies and corrupt officials, they were not prepared for a broader war that would create a new social order and new state that was yet to be identified.[69] Thomas Marks also observes that "(the Shining Path) appears to have mobilized apparent (popular) support, yet it engages in practices which would seemingly alienate potential followers."[70] This is indicative of the level of violence that the Shining Path carried out not only against government forces and structures but against innocent civilians.

The key puzzle to the analysts at the time was how an insurgency that was so brutal and violent, even against civilians, could command considerable popular support. During the early 1980s the key question was how the Shining Path was able to expand its influence despite its dogmatism and brutal tactics.[71] It was a known fact that the movement used extreme violence to maintain its grip on the populace (and probably was aware of the negative consequences) but chose to ignore it deliberately because it believed that it could push for the final decision through military means and did not need to court the people anymore. The neglect of popular support at the latter stage may have stemmed from the traditional communist mistrust in the common people to rise spontaneously for revolution. As Chernick argues, "Sendero Luminoso represented a pedagogical project … its assertion of authority based on Leninist style (vanguardist, democratically centralized and distrustful of the masses) pedagogy of revolution." [72]

The role played by local resistance groups or "self-defense groups" is also given considerable credit for the failure of the Shining Path, but it is more of an extreme manifestation of loss of popular support that was mobilized against the movement in an

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[69] Chernick, "PCP-SL: The Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Peru," 306.

[70] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 253.

[71] Hazleton and Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the future of Peruvian Democracy," 21–35.

[72] Chernick, "PCP-SL: The Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Peru," 301.

organized manner rather than anything else.[73] The spontaneous local resistance to the Shining Path's brutality was an ominous sign for the movement's sustainability. Hazleton remarked that "Sendero will not necessarily triumph but on the contrary the anti-popular violence that it has injected into the system may prove to be self-destructive."[74] The level of violence perpetrated by the Shining Path was excessive. An estimate puts the number of displaced civilians at around 200,000, which left many mountain villages as ghost villages.[75] Also, more than 30,000 people (many of them civilians) were killed, a figure that is more than double what the Maoist insurgency in Nepal claimed in the same number of years.[76] Insurgencies strive to maintain a balance between coercion and persuasion, however, the Shining Path preferred coercion alone. As the end showed, the Shining Path failed partly due to its self-destructive, coercive schemes for gaining and maintaining popular support and partly because of the dramatic collapse its organizational structure suffered at the hands of a compromised leadership.

F. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Leadership is crucial to the outcome of an insurgency since it has a primary responsibility in determining the approach of an insurgency. The leaders need to make critical decisions about issues such as the redefining of goals and the revision of ideologies and strategies in order to exploit political opportunities to further the insurgent objectives. Besides charisma, an insurgent leadership requires the ability to identify opportunity and craft an approach with pragmatism and flexibility in order to achieve success. Guzman's leadership, in contrast, was not only dictatorial and centralized but also dogmatic, which prevented any possibility for seizing political opportunities.

Guzman, a professor of philosophy, left the Peruvian Communist Party after the Sino-Soviet rift to establish the Shining Path. He was very idealistic and accused other

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[73] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, and Chernick, "PCP-SL: The Defeat of Sendero Luminoso in Peru."

[74] Hazleton and Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democarcy," 33.

[75] The Library of Congress Country Studies, CIA Fact Book, "Peru: Shining Path and its Impact," http://www.photius.com/countries/peru/society/peru_society_shining_path_and_its~10254.html (accessed October 21, 2010).

[76] Palmer, *The Shining Path of Peru*, 2.

communists of "betraying their Maoist origins by promoting the 'privilege' of the cities and having 'scorn for the countryside,'" and he decided to continue his efforts to lead a rural-based revolt against the Lima regime.[77] He used his position in the University to recruit an ideologically-inclined faculty and members for the organization.

Guzman's leadership appeared to be unquestioned and the organization drew from his utopian vision. The authority for deciding on strategy resided in the hands of Guzman alone.[78] The regional commanders only played a coordinating role as far as organizational strategy was concerned, and they were reduced to the role of passing orders and instructions down the chain to local levels. Guzman, under the nom de guerre of Comrade Gonjalo, carefully created an image of genius and omnipresence among his followers and remained a force behind the organization.[79] His influence inside the organization was such that observers concluded that "he had shaped Sendero into his own image, determining the agenda, direction and ideological orientation. Isolated and aloof he exercised a strong hold over the movement's leadership and rank and file alike."[80] He presented himself in an almost religious manner among the highland peasantry that was designed to appeal to local superstitions and customs.

According to Ann Ruth Wilner, four key attributes of a charismatic leadership apply here. The relationship between Guzman and the Shining Path can be considered a clear case of the charismatic leader-follower relationship that is based upon these four characteristics. First, the group leader is believed to possess a unique vision and superhuman qualities. Second, group followers unquestioningly accept the leader's views, statements, and judgments. Third, they comply with his orders and directives without condition. Last, they give the leader unqualified support and devotion.[81] In this situation he commands absolute authority.

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[77] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism,' 110–114.

[78] Ibid., 112.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 113.

[81] Ann Ruth Wilner, *The Spellbinders* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 25.

The almost god-like image of Guzman and his unquestioned authority within the organization proved to be a weakness and a major liability for two reasons. First, it undermined the ability of the organization to operate and survive in the absence of its leader. Second, it limited the organization's ability to make rational decisions based upon an assessment of prevailing situations. The second characteristic is more important because the organization, although successful in establishing and consolidating its gains, could not convert it into the ultimate objective of grabbing the state power. The lack of strategic flexibility in exercising different political options could not be considered. Additionally, the extremely militaristic approach taken by the leadership left little room for debate about the appropriateness of the approach within the party. This centralized and personalized form of organization and leadership proved to be a major weakness, which became evident after the capitulation of the movement once Guzman was captured.[82]

G. EXTERNAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Insurgencies can develop with or without external support or sponsorship, but for the sustainment or success of the insurgency, external support can be critical because it can bridge the disparity of resources between the government and the insurgency. However, the Shining Path did not have such support. The Shining Path remained aloof and insulated from other left-wing revolutionary movements and possible sources of external support.[83] On the domestic front, it refused to make an alliance with the legal left, and externally, it deliberately avoided contact with other socialist and communist governments. The Shining Path called them revisionists, thus it developed as an indigenous movement without the support of the Soviets or the Chinese.[84] This factor worked both as strength and a weakness of the insurgency. This factor was a strength in the sense that due to the Shining Path's indigenous nature it was able to command the allegiance of the people and stood on a higher morale plain. It was also a weakness

[82] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," 119–122.

[83] Hazleton and Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democracy," 22.

[84] Blaufarb and Tanham, *Who Will Win?*, 23.

because it severely restricted its ability to exploit political openings created by external concerns in order to achieve its own goals. The utility of external involvement becomes clear in Chapter IV where I will explain how the NCP-M successfully exploited the concerns of the Indian government and enlisted their intervention in favor of the NCP-M against the Nepalese monarchy.[85]

The Shining Path's primary means of financial support came from the Indian communities of the Altiplano. While early contributions were voluntary, the contributions evolved into a taxation or extortion. Additional support was gathered through bank robberies and expropriations from local landowners, petty capitalists, and elements of the peasantry considered hostile to the Shining Path cause.[86] The drug trade was also an important source of funds. The local drug dealers bought protection from the Shining Path and were able to divert the attention of law enforcement agencies. This provides an example of the natural alliance between an insurgent movement and criminals. First, insurgencies are open to the idea of recruiting individuals from criminal groups because they are already skilled in arms, and in turn, the criminals are also responsive because they gain protection by being a part of the movement. Similarities are found in this regard between the Shining Path and the NCP-M, which provided protection to the sandalwood smugglers in Nepal.[87]

H. ANALYSIS OF THE OVERALL APPROACH

Analysis of some key variables as prerequisites for insurgent success suggests that the Shining Path stands out as an insurgency because it advocated the purest form of Maoism and executed its people's war strategy through a ruthless militaristic strategy of terror and guerilla warfare. Although political strategies were also applied by the insurgency at the local level, its application overall was not balanced with its military element. This remains the primary reason for the Shining Path's failure, because, while it chose to ignore political approaches, it lacked the military might it needed to be capable

[85] See details in Chapter IV.

[86] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," 115–117.

[87] The Kathmandu Post correspondent, "Maoist Cadre Caught with a Consignment of Sandalwood," *The Kathmandu Post*, January 12, 2004.

of delivering a decisive blow to the Peruvian state. This paradoxical relationship between its approach and capabilities in relation to its objectives possibly explains its failure.

Guzman believed and openly professed that armed struggle is the only means of achieving victory, and he wanted political violence to play a fundamental role in the revolutionary process in transforming the semi-feudal nature of Peruvian society.[88] Hence, he considered popular war to be the principle form of struggle. However, for the popular war to culminate in seizure of political power, the people's army needed to be able to defeat the state military. The Shining Path, although capable of parading with arms in broad daylight in Lima, was in reality unable to confront the Peruvian state directly. Hence, it executed a concerted campaign of terror against the symbols of Lima's authority, the economy, and foreign supporters.[89]

The Shining Path's terror strategy compensated for the lack of conventional capability. It was used as an instrument to enforce revolutionary order in areas that were in contestation with the state or areas that had fallen under guerilla control. Since the Shining Path abhorred cooperation with other political forces and called them revisionists, violence remained the only means for waging and winning the revolution. That is why it preached militarism. Glowing references to bravery in revolutionary war appeared throughout the Shining Path's tracts and advocated violence and violence alone.[90]

McCormick describes the Shining Path's use of terrorism for advancing its purported goals. The Shining Path carried out "people's trials" to punish landowners, corrupt officials, and local businessmen. Annihilation of class enemies featured prominently in Sendero's tactics. These were carried out as coordinated acts of assassination and the posting of death threats to disrupt and paralyze local institutions. The targets also sometimes included political institutions, labor and peasant organizations, and even the police. Sendero would declare a place to be a "Zone of

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[88] Gonzalo interview.

[89] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," 114.

[90] Cynthia McClintok, "Theories of Revolution and the Case of Peru," in *The Shining Path of Peru,* eds., David Scott Palmer, 249 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

liberation." Once that was done they would round up large number of local administrators, community leaders, and other "traitors," and, after a brief "people's trial" they would be shot, hung, mutilated, or beaten for their crimes against the revolution.[91] This obvious ideological inclination toward violence and clear manifestation of violent methods in implementing its strategies and tactics prevented the organization from exploiting any political opportunity and led ultimately to its failure.

In the quest to preserve its so called political purity, the Shining Path rejected any alliance with the "legal left" or the Marxist left and other guerilla groups in Peru. By rejecting these alliances, it lost the opportunity to create a united front with other political forces and bring a full force against the Lima regime. While the military dictatorship went on in Peru, the democratic left grouped as the Izquierda Unida (IU) and sought to build a participatory democracy. It was especially active in Villa El Salvador. Rather than joining hands with the IU and broadening its political alliance in order to attack Lima, the Shining Path termed them revisionists and tried to destroy them. The persistent attacks of the Shining Path against the leaders and supporters of the IU antagonized the civil organizations and individuals who supported the IU.[92] This act of alienation became counterproductive as popular support slowly diminished and the counterinsurgency abilities of the government strengthened.

Hostility against the legal left impacted the Shining Path in two ways. It opened two fronts for contestation of political authority. The Shining Path fought not only the state for political authority but also the well-established left parties that required extra resources. Due to this, the Shining Path was unable to infiltrate the labor unions. Although the two main labor unions of Peru, the General Confederation of Workers of Peru (CGTP) and the Teachers labor union (SUTEP), were drawn to radicalism, they were opposed to terrorism.[93] This also supports the notion that the overtly militaristic approach of the Shining Path prevented it from making useful allies. According to Marks,

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[91] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," 118.

[92] Burt, *Political Violence and the Authoritarian State in Peru: Silencing Civil Society*, 10.

[93] Gabriela Tarazona-Sevillano, "The Organization of Shining Path," in *The Shining Path of Peru,* ed. David Scott Palmer 202–203 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

it is puzzling as to why the Shining Path, which claimed Maoist inspiration, rejected the necessity for a united front strategy that was so much advocated by Mao himself and instead adopted a dogmatic concept of self reliance.[94] Their vision of reproducing Mao's "people's war" in its purest form may not have been an accurate one and possibly denied the Shining Path one of the most influential means of broadening its support base. This kept it from having the political influence that it needed to deliver a fatal blow to the Lima regime.

Although the party's very first plenary session in September 1987 endorsed a strategic shift from protracted rural warfare to an accelerated, urban-based revolution, it remained purely a military shift.[95] No initiatives were taken either toward consolidation of the political front or to begin negotiation with the government once the focus shifted to cities. Even when the organization reached a stage whereby its activists and sympathizers were able to march through central Lima waving banners and throwing bombs, called "the march without fear" in May 1988, it still didn't show any interest in negotiation or forming political alliances. In fact, in Guzman's famous 1988 interview, he ruled out any cooperation with the "reactionary" politicians of the IU and charged that the existing popular organizations were "obstacles to the revolution" and directed Sendero's attacks towards them as well.[96]

The Shining Path also did not believe in participating in elections. Guzman dismissed legislative activities and elections and questioned their ability to deliver. He said "looking at Peru's experience, what revolutionary transformation has the people achieved through voting, or in parliamentary activity?"[97] In fact, the Shining Path began their armed movement by burning a ballot box in May 1980 on the eve of Peru's first national election. But, contrary to the liking of the Shining Path, Peru recorded better

[94] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 254.

[95] Hazleton and Hazleton, "Sendero Luminoso and the Future of Peruvian Democracy," 20.

[96] Ibid., 24.

[97] McClintok, "Theories of Revolution and the case of Peru," 249.

national turnout for elections.[98] This possibly signaled the power of electoral politics and the Shining Path's coming failure, because people had shown faith in the process.[99] Rejection of all other forms of contestation with the state besides the military option was the hallmark of the Shining Path and probably the reason for its failure.

It would, however, be wrong to say that the Shining Path insurgency did not involve politics in its operation. Some consider the strategy of the Shining Path to be comprehensive and claim that it did have political strategies that were aimed at "gaining local support, neutralizing opponents, and advancing its revolutionary cause … The examples of its political strategies are the construction of local forms of governance, the provision of local security, vigilante justice, punishment of corruption … pursued by the Shining Path to build support in the local community."[100] It definitely attempted to create and occupy the political space in the Peruvian landscape. The Shining Path successfully created its ideological base among the university students who became the flag bearers and preachers of its ideology. Similarly, it exploited the Indian ethnic groups of the Ayachucho districts and their grievances for recruitment and mobilization purposes. Furthermore, the Shining Path created sympathy among the general populace by standing out from the corrupt and inept politicians and Peruvian politics. He further argues that these political strategies accompanied the use of terrorist violence against civilian targets.

However, the Nepal case illustrates that a balance between the two is critical for success. The Shining Path did not demonstrate such a balance between the military and political approaches. The brutality and extent of the Shining Path's violence has often obscured the political strategies the group pursued.[101] Its attraction to violence and relative political isolation might have given it the initial advantage in terms of credibility and popular support, but once it began to rely too much on violence the support swung

[98] The voter turnout for the 1990 elections was 7,999,978. The total number of registered voters was 10,042,599 people out of a population of 21,550,000 according to the political *handbook of the world 1991,* (Binghamton, NY: CSA Publications, 1991.)

[99] Palmer, *The Shining Path of Peru,* 259.

[100] Ibid., 12.

[101] Ibid.

the other way. The Shining Path's belief that it could march to the seat of power with military might and without political maneuvering of some sort led to its ultimate downfall.

I. CONCLUSIONS

The Shining Path's refusal to make the critical decision to adopt a political alternative in place of a continued overtly-militaristic and terrorist-like approach in order to reach its objective led to its failure. The balance between persuasion and coercion is the key for insurgents anywhere. As long as the movement continued using violence only as a tool in support of the functioning and expansion of its political structure and not as an end unto itself, the movement could remain viable.[102] The Shining Path couldn't maintain the balance or chose to consolidate its political gains resulting in the loss of popular support. The Shining Path used the Maoist approach…in a purposeful effort to force a solution for society's ills upon a populace not ready to accept its answer.[103]

Marks further comments that in the pursuit of ideological purity, Maoist insurgencies become increasingly divorced from the masses they purport to serve. The militaristic components, those associated with "people's war," have come to overshadow those embodied in the "united front" and the "mass line." Marks noticed that while attempting to pass judgment upon their approaches, one cannot allow their opportunism to pass automatically for ideological content. There is, however, a clear case for military domination over political consideration in the approaches motivated by ideology.[104] This observation is very important, and its impact on the outcome of an insurgency is profound for various reasons.

First, the Shining Path's rejection of conventional political methods to augment the political position it gained through local political strategies (such as parallel government, an alternative judicial system, and other similar programs that could help win popular support) did not help the organization to consolidate its authority. By using

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[102] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 272.

[103] Ibid., 273.

[104] Ibid., 255.

extreme violence against the civilian populace its local political structures became unpopular and met with local resistance at later stages. Thus we see a gradual decay in the popular support enjoyed by it in the beginning. This culminated in outright resistance by the population.

Second, its outright rejection of external socialist / communist solidarity was against Mao's principles and cost the Shining Path in terms of the international legitimacy that it needed to establish itself as a revolutionary group and not as a terrorist organization. Similarly, its rejection of the legal left and any possibility of an alliance with them also went against Mao's united front strategy and left the Shining Path on its own. The clear contradiction that the Shining Path demonstrated with Maoism was partly a result of an improper interpretation of the united front framework. Marks thus argues that what the Shining Path was doing was not really Maoism since they were more dogmatic concerning self-reliance than Mao appears to advocate.

The analysis of Palmer and Marks brings to the fore the predominantly military approach of the Peruvian insurgency. McCormick has termed the Shining Path a terrorist organization and argued that its "isolation and extremism" were its main weaknesses. From the very beginning, the Shining Path denounced the political approach by rejecting any form of association with the legal left. Similarly, its uncompromisingly rigid ideological belief also became a liability that was in fact contrary to Mao's idea of creating as wide an opposition base as possible against the state.[105] Furthermore, the Shining Path's indiscriminate use of terror also contributed to its loss of popular support.

This overtly militant approach possibly stems from the "frustration of its leader Guzman about the corruption of Marxist ideology and prevalence of revisionism in Peruvian left politics that drove him to lead a revolution that is ideologically pure."[106] The unquestioned nature of Guzman's authority within the party also ensured that the

[105] McCormick, "The Shining Path and Peruvian Terrorism," 109–124.

[106] Marks and Palmer, *Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics*, 7–8.

most radical line would prevail within the party, and that its fundamental principle would revolve around the thoughts of Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Comrade Gonjalo.[107]

Although the Shining Path is still operating in Peru, its political base is weak and military capability is insignificant. The movement that was once on the verge of capturing the state is no longer a serious threat to the Peruvian state but is reduced to a law and order problem. To conclude, the failure of the Shining Path can be summarized as a combined result of its ideological dogma, rigidity of leadership, preference for violence, domestic and international isolationism, reliance on coercive means for popular support, and rejection of negotiation and electoral politics. All factors combined, it shows that the military-dominant approach taken by the insurgency (at the cost of a politico-military balanced approach) is the primary reason for its failure.

[107] Abimael Gujman, interview by Louis Arce Borja and Janet Talavera Sanchez, "La Intervista del Siglo: El Presidente Gonjalo rompe el Silencio," *El Diario,* July 24, 1988: 2–48.

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III. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CPP/NPA)

A. INTRODUCTION

The CPP/NPA is another case of a Maoist insurgency that failed to achieve its final political objective despite making significant revolutionary advances. It seemed to have all the ingredients that lead an insurgency to success. The movement was successful in framing the grievances existing in Philippine society and was able to incite an armed insurgency through sound political organization and social mobilization. The movement waged a war against a dictatorship, had considerable popular and external support, boasted a strong armed wing, even practiced relatively flexible strategies of united front, had alliances of convenience, and engaged in negotiation yet still failed.

Since its beginning in 1968, the movement grew so rapidly that it appeared on the verge of capturing the state power in the mid-1980s, and it contributed to the fall of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. But in the years following Marcos's fall, the movement gradually declined. Many leaders of the movement were captured, its armed wing was depleted, and it lost its mass base in many areas. Although the insurgency still persists in the Philippines and retains some appeal, it is no longer a threat to the democratic Philippine state. What, then, led to its failure?

In this chapter, I show that the CPP/NPA failed in the period after 1986 because of its inability to recognize the changes in the environment. I present a case to show that despite a dramatic change in the political mood of the population, a shift in international dynamics, reduced utility of armed movement, and availability of political opportunity, the movement still chose to continue armed struggle along the dogmatic lines of Maoist ideology. Interestingly, it gave up the very elements of flexibility and pragmatism that allowed it to grow in the early period. Its failure to participate in electoral politics was the main cause of its failure.

This chapter will assess the CPP/NPA's approach toward insurgency through the use of similar variables as were applied to the Shining Path with an aim to identifying a relationship between an insurgent approach and the final outcome.

B. BACKGROUND

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was formed in 1968. Like other radical communist movements around the world, the CPP was also a breakaway faction of the original Communist Party in the Philippines, the PKP (Partido Komunista ng Philipnas or Philippine Communist Party). Disappointed by the party's performance, "Jose Maria Sison, a university lecturer, organized the CPP almost entirely on Mao's doctrine of peasant-based mass revolution." [108] With Marxism and Maoism as its ideological base, the CPP spread the revolution by exploiting Philippine nationalism, peasant unrest, and growing political activism against a corrupt and weak state led by Marcos.

Sison established the New People's Army (NPA) as the guerilla arm of the party in 1969. The NPA grew in strength and capability and threatened the Philippine Armed Forces considerably. It expanded tremendously in the years between 1970 and 1980 and was noted as a formidable political and military force that was capable of capturing state power in the Philippines. Although the actual numbers for the NPA were debated, there is little doubt that it was a capable military force. CPP's mouthpiece paper, *Ang Bayan*, reported in December 1984 that over 30,000 Filipinos were members of the party, and the NPA had over 20,000 troops.[109]

The CPP also established the National Democratic Front (NDF) in 1971 with the objective of garnering the "widest political, diplomatic, and financial support for the revolution."[110] It incorporated many other underground organizations including the influential Christians for National Liberation (CNL). The NDF still serves as the

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[108] Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution*, (Boulder: West view Press, 1989), 23.

[109] Richard J. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 28–51.

[110] Miriam Coronel Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," in *A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007), 411.

backbone of both the underground revolutionary structure and the overt political movement.[111] But the relationship between the CPP and NDF appears entangled in a debate as to whether the NDF should serve the CPP or operate with relative autonomy. This exposes a certain tension about whether the open or underground organization should be most important.[112]

In terms of influence, Van Der Kroef estimated that by 1988 the CPP/NPA held 20 percent of the operational control over the Barangays and exercised some degree of influence in all 73 provinces.[113] He also believed that the NPA was on the verge of "entering the threshold of the strategic stalemate" with the government.[114] With its popularity soaring and increased military capability, a communist takeover of the Philippines seemed inevitable.

The political setting, however, changed very quickly when Corazon Aquino took over the office of the president after Marcos was ousted from power in 1986. The presidential elections preceding Marcos's ousting were boycotted by the CPP/NPA. By this time, although the NPA was still carrying out operations, the CPP was losing its appeal and popular support. Marks observed "the CPP is in a state of complete disarray and wracked by internal factionalism amounting to a virtual schism between elements favoring opposing strategic approaches to the conflict. Consequently, increasing numbers of the cadres decided to call it quits."[115] The insurgency slowly faltered and Marks concluded that "while the CPP bid for power has not ended, strategically the conflict is now only the government's to lose." [116] Other alternative explanations for the decline of the insurgency also exist, such as reforms carried out by the government, effective counterinsurgency operations by the armed forces, and loss of popular support owing to violence by the NPA. But the decline was primarily an outcome of the faulty strategic

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[111] Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 411.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Justus M. Van Der Kroef, "Acquino and the Communists: A Philippine Strategic Stalemate?" *World Affairs* 151, no. 3 (1998–1989): 117.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 83.

[116] Ibid. 85.

approach taken by the party that neither took into account the realities surrounding the Philippines nor was able to recognize political opportunities.

Despite the fact that the insurgency is still going on after 40 years, it is unable to convert its achievements into political victory. It is probably the longest-running communist insurgency in the world besides the Naxals in India who have been fighting since the 1950s. It may still make a comeback, since the current Philippine state is mired in "so much political corruption, fraud and violence that many Filipinos have become cynical about the country's political system."[117] Although Nathan Gilbert Quimpo rules out a revival of "naked authoritarian rule" or a communist takeover, he remains concerned that prospects for a democratic consolidation are bleak.[118] The insurgency survives mainly because there is a growing number of Filipinos who are frustrated at the weak Philippine state that is unable to address the socioeconomic grievances of the peasants.

While I provide an analysis of the reasons for the insurgency's failure and the link with its militaristic approach, it is important to analyze the nature of the grievances that were framed by the movement and the resources it employed. The resources it employed included ideology, leadership, popular support, and finances. Similarly, it is also useful to assess how it perceived political opportunities such as negotiations or participation in elections. This will help in answering the questions of why it decided for or against particular approaches and therefore shaped the outcome.

C. GRIEVANCES LEADING TO THE INSURGENCY

The insurgency in the Philippines is a product of rural as well as urban grievances. Because of the domestic dynamics of the Philippines in the late 1970s, the Philippines could be considered to be ripe for a revolution. While the rural poor were suffering from social exploitation, lack of land reform, and destitution, the urban population was seeking democratic freedom, fundamental rights, and good governance.

[117] Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, "The Philippines: Predatory Regime, Growing Authoritarian Features," *The Pacific Review*, 22, no. 3, (July 2009): 335–353.

[118] Ibid.

The civil liberty and international solidarity movements that surged throughout the world during the 1970s also energized younger people to organize and rally behind revolutionary movements. Nationalist sentiments against U.S. occupation also played a key role in allowing the CPP/NPA to efficiently exploit the existing conditions to create an insurgency.

The rural poor were "desperate and outraged" by the increasing poverty, repression, and lack of institutional means to seek redress for their grievances.[119] Their grievances were primarily related to the land and the system of its ownership and the subsequent exploitation by the rich. Land reform in an agrarian society is a crucial part of the socioeconomic transformation and can be a major source of contention. In the Philippines, the peasants became ever more disgruntled by the insensitivities demonstrated by the Marcos regime combined with the exploitation by local government administrators and the atrocities perpetrated by the local governments.[120]

Similarly, the world youth movement of the late 1960s also influenced the Filipinos. Many youths, workers, and intellectuals radicalized in the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Lack of political liberty and justice produced insurgent organizations. Additionally, the bad practices and undemocratic methods of the government and the high level of corruption in the Marcos regime were a source of discontent among both the rural and urban population. The element of military repression and widespread human rights abuse also worked in the favor of the insurgency. For the years between 1975 and 1988, one source puts the number of disappeared people at 902 and the number of extrajudicial killings at 2,983.[121]

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[119] Rosanne Rutten, "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA: Experience in a Hacienda in Negros Occidental, 1978–1995," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986,* ed. Patricio N. Abinales, 111 (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996).

[120] Gareth Porter, "The Politics of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: Military and Political Options," occasional paper, *Philippine Studies,* no. 9 (Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawaii: 1987), 25 quoted in Rutten, "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA," Experience in a Hacienda in Negros Occidental, 1978–1995," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986,* ed. Patricio N. Abinales, 111 (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996).

[121] Source: Task Force Detainees, Philippines, *Philippines Human Rights Update* (Manila, monthly issue for periods covered) cited by Kessler in *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines,* 137.

The U.S. presence in the Philippines and its interference in the country's political and economic affairs (even post-independence) helped to sustain an intelligentsia-backed nationalist and anti-U.S. discourse.[122] This remained a primary source of motivation for the revolutionary movement until the U.S. bases were removed from the Philippines. Although both the democratic parties and socialist parties were protesting about the same issues, it was the revolutionary left led by the CPP/NPA that was able to capture the imagination of the people.

D. IDEOLOGY

The CPP's ideology was primarily Marxist and Maoist in orientation, but it also had a Leninist aspect to it. The CPP/NPA's ideology and political objectives are reflected in such founding papers as "the CPP's Constitution," "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," "Program for People's Democratic Revolution," and the "Main Tasks of the Party." It borrowed the idea of building a "national democracy" from Mao's 'new democracy" concept and at the same time advocated a form of democratic socialism. [123] The writings of its leader, Jose Mario Sison, under the name of Amado Guerrero, further shaped its ideology and strategy to a large extent. His writings urged the party to "rectify" the mistakes made by the PKP, among which "dogmatism" or the "rigid application of communist doctrine" was one of the biggest mistakes.[124] It also cautioned against a "tendency to separate political practice from theoretical guidance."[125]

Kessler notes that Sison proposed creating a "broad national alliance" of all classes based upon the idea that the Philippines represented a semi-feudal society under neo-colonial rule. Thus he felt it was important to "wage a national democratic revolution of the new type … before the 'proletarian-socialist revolution' could be made."[126] This clearly emphasized the need for political efforts to be carried out alongside military

[122] Miriam Coronel Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 406.

[123] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam*, 92.

[124] Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 58.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., 60.

actions. These activities would include building coalitions, establishing fronts, and organizing the peasants as the party's power base that was to become a "key to the CPP's success over the next decade."[127]

Furthermore, the party's "ten point program" also pronounced that "there should be no monopoly of power by any class, party, or group. The degree of participation in the government by any political force should be based on its … role in the revolution."[128] Many considered this to be a clear indication that the CPP/NPA was willing to accept a postcapitalist coalition along the lines of democratic socialism. Marks, on the other hand, makes a counterargument that it was not that the CPP/NPA was according priority to a united front over armed struggle, but that they were simply practicing Maoism because a united front is not a departure from Maoist strategy but an essential tenet of it.[129] Either way, it reflects an ideological train of thought that is Maoist in orientation and at the same time takes into account the important role of various political forces in making the revolution.

Unlike the Shining Path that, for reasons of "purity" avoided any possibility of political alliance with the legal left or formation of a united front, the CPP/NPA realized that political alliances were important and a united front strategy should be one of the key components of the insurgency. It is argued that the CPP/NPA neither emphasized nor exercised ideological dogmatism. Sison in particular emphasized empiricism and not ideology and the ideologues within the party were attacked for their failure to adopt pragmatic tactics suitable to practical applications.[130] This made the CPP/NPA different in ideological flexibility in comparison to the dogmatism adopted by the Shining Path that saw all other political forces as not only revisionist but as the enemies of revolution. In this way, a striking similarity existed between the approach taken by the NCP-M and

[127] Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 58.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 110.

[130] Ibid.

the CPP/NPA. The Nepalese Maoists also gave up the dogmatic Maoist approach during their "Chunwang (a village in the Rolpa district of Western Nepal) conference" for a more pragmatic and flexible approach.

After performing a geopolitical analysis, Sison adopted Mao's vision of the classic protracted people's war going through the phases of "Strategic Defensive," "Strategic Stalemate," and "Strategic Offensive." [131] Although the armed wing of the party, the NPA, continued its operations against the Philippine Armed Forces, the CPP/NPA learned quickly about its own military weaknesses and adapted to the reality. Kessler praises the ability of the CPP/NPA to adapt saying that the "party's flexibility in this respect was impressive."[132] The CPP/NPA was not averse to internal debate and was prompt in making regular changes in military strategy according to the situation. The CPP/NPA was characterized by a change in command structure and adaptation of adecentralized "archipelagic struggle" in 1975 followed by recentralization in 1981.[133] Thus it can be implied that the primary approach taken by the CPP/NPA leadership was a balanced one until the late 1970s because the party appeared interested in preserving its military on the one hand while expanding its political base on the other hand.

This ideological thought guided the three-pronged strategy of the CPP/NPA. One, build the party; two, initiate the armed struggle; and three, forge a national united front. While the party's ideology remained rooted in the theoretical works of Marx and Mao, the CPP/NPA appeared much more flexible and adaptable in terms of its interpretation in the unique context of the Philippines. This made the CPP/NPA an ideologically nondogmatic and flexible political party that was very similar to the NCP-M as compared to the overtly rigid and dogmatic Shining Path.

E. THE BEGINNING OF THE DECLINE

The main turning point for the insurgency was its decision to boycott the presidential elections in 1985. This is significant in the sense that not only was the voter

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[131] Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 59.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

turnout in these elections encouraging, but these elections were also successful in dislodging a dictator. This proved that the transfer of power, democratization, and transformation of a society could be achieved also through nonviolent political means. The boycotting of the election thus stands as a strategic mistake made by the communist party in recognizing a critical political opportunity. The difference between the fate of the NCP-M, who entered into a negotiated settlement with the government and subsequently participated in elections, and the fate of the CPP/NPA, who refused to participate in the elections, makes the point clear. The CPP/NPA made blunders in assessing popular sentiment, an increasingly hostile international environment, and, more importantly, in how critical the political opportunity presented to them was. By participating in the elections, they could have exploited the situation to achieve their objectives.

The situation became more problematic for the CPP/NPA in 1987 when Sison tried to lead the communist movement towards a more "rigid orthodoxy."[134] This reaffirmation of orthodoxy led to a series of organizational splits. The CPP/NPA was embroiled in the internal struggle between the "reaffirmists" (pro-Sison) and the "rejectionists."[135] Magno names the decision not to participate in the political process and the continuation of the armed struggle as the "strategic political error" that led to disillusionment in the party ranks and the beginning of intense internal debates on ideology and strategy.[136] The faction led by Sison, however, emerged victorious from these internal debates, and finally the CPP/NPA affirmed the original Maoist ideological principles by abandoning the innovative approaches previously adopted by the party. This supposed "rectification" of ideology was followed by bloody purges within its own ranks where many of the party cadres were tortured or killed by their own comrades. Broader infighting and further splits in the party were observed in the 1990s followed by the assassinations of rejectionist leaders like Felimon Lagman (former head of the Manila commission of the CPP), Arturo Tabara (former head of the Visyas commission of the

[134] Alexander R. Magno, "The Filipino Left at the Crossroads: Current Debates on Strategy and Revolution," in *Revisiting Marxism in the Philippines,* (Manila: Anvils Publishing Inc., 1988), 56.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid.

CPP) and even Romulo Kintanar (former head of the NPA).[137] Frequent clashes among rival insurgent armed units were also reported. The reversal of approach by the CPP/NPA against the pragmatic approach in the changed national and international context became counterproductive for the insurgency.

Magno argues that the politico-military strategies during the early eighties were innovative and more devolutionary in nature. They involved armed action with mass mobilization in the cities, greater freedom for internal debate, and openness to genuine united front activities.[138] This approach, in fact, reduced the primacy of the traditional Maoist notion of the importance of armed struggle, which did not appeal to the hardliners. For them, the party center was yielding too much authority to the regional commissions and was deviating from the ideological purity of Maoism. Thus Sison and the gang of hardliners implemented the "rectification" campaign that had a sense of "coherent ideological identity, comprehensive schematics and a uniform analysis of the revolutionary project."[139] This departure from innovation, pragmatism, and political primacy and move towards the classic, protracted struggle (despite significant gains) is difficult to explain and remains a puzzle for many.

The NCP-M, on the other hand, had decided to stick to its "peace and constitution" agenda in Nepal. Despite pressures from the hardliners within the party and the risks involved, the party joined the mainstream. In the recent Central Committee meeting that took place in July 2010, the hardliners led by influential leader Mohan Baidya, alias Kiran, exerted tremendous pressure to begin a fresh "people's revolt" to

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[137] Magno, "The Filipino Left at the Crossroads," 56.

[138] Ibid., 16

[139] Kathleen Weekly, "Jose Ma. Sison: Talks on Parliamentary Struggle, Revisionism, Inner Party Rectification, Peace Talks, Gorbachevism in the Philippines and the Future of the National Democratic Movement," in *Kasarinlan* (Fourth Quarter 1992), Quoted in Alexander Magno, "The Insurgency that Would Not Go Away," 317, Rodolfo Severino and Lorraine Carlos Salazar, eds. *Whither the Philippines in the 21st Century* (Manila: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007) 313–330.

seize power. However, the Central Committee decided to stick with parliamentary politics despite the failure of its chairman, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, to sack the Army chief when he was the Prime minister.[140]

F. POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

The CPP/NPA's political objectives appear relatively tangible and attainable if compared to the Shining Path, however, they do not match the precision of the NCP-M. They preached "not just a change in leadership but a change in society," although their vision of the new society was as obscure as it could be. Their case for structural reform was well-articulated and gave the hope of liberation from poverty to the peasants and promised them a new and more elevated status in society.[141] The political objectives did suffer from the usual utopian vagueness of the Maoist vision, yet the objectives had a definite focus on land reform and social justice.[142] This is possibly the reason that the insurgency continues to exist despite the progress made by the government in terms of democratic consolidation and socioeconomic reforms. The CPP/NPA's offer for land reform, housing, and medical services keeps the peasants interested in supporting the insurgency and ensures its continuity.[143]

The CPP/NPA advocated a national democratic revolution to overthrow the "semi colonial and semi feudal" system as a necessary transition to attain socialism and full economic and political sovereignty.[144] Agrarian reform remained at the core of its radical land redistribution program which was to be implemented after seizure of political power.[145] The party assumed the vanguard role and adopted the protracted people's war strategy with workers and peasants as the main agents. However, they did not provide a

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[140] Post Bahadur Basnet, "Are the Maoists Status Quoists or what?" My Republica, October 23, 2010 http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23153 (accessed September 13, 2010).

[141] Weekly, "Jose Ma. Sison: Talks on Parliamentary Struggle," 327 quoted in Magno, "The Insurgency that Would Not Go Away."

[142] Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 152.

[143] Ibid., 151.

[144] Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 405–431.

[145] Ibid.

specific plan or agenda for this change. The NCP-M, on the other hand, although preaching a vague objective of "socio-economic transformation of the Nepalese state" articulated the clear political objectives of abolishing the monarchy, electing a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution, and establishing a federal system of governance along ethnic and geographic lines with considerable devolution of power to the states.[146] Clarity in political objectives for a twenty-first century insurgency is advantageous in many ways. First, it helps to guide party efforts towards achieving the objectives and keeps the cadres committed. Second, it ensures continuity of support or sympathy from the reformist intelligentsia, civil society, general population, and even international community to an extent. Last, it allows for communication of reliable expectations and creates trust between the two conflicting parties, which makes negotiation possible.

Despite the CPP/NPA's demonstration of ideological flexibility and relative clarity of political objectives in the early phases, the insurgency jumped into the abyss of ideological rigidity and continued armed struggle. The shift is inexplicable yet very important because it marks a landmark contribution to the outcome of the insurgency. The relative success of the insurgency prior to the ideological reversal towards dogmatism and the failure of the insurgency after the policy shift are clear testimony to the challenges faced by a Maoist insurgency in a democratic society in which the grievances of the population can be addressed by other means.

G. POPULAR SUPPORT

Analysts consider popular support to be a critical element for insurgent success, because it is the primary resource that strengthens the will and capability of the insurgent movement. Popular support grows because of existing or perceived grievances that are heightened through careful framing of the issues. O'Neill further classifies popular support as active and passive and argues that active support of the population to the

[146] Lawoti and Pahari, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," 3–23.

extent that they are willing to "make sacrifices and risk personal harm for insurgent cause" is vital especially in the context of a protracted people's war.[147]

The dramatic rise of the CPP/NPA in the 1970s and early 1980s, its steady decline during the late 1980s and the 1990s, and its current existence is a testimony to the changing nature of popular support in the insurgency. It is clear that the CPP/NPA was able to command a huge and active support of the population, especially among the rural poor, when the insurgency began. The ensuing decline of the CPP/NPA during the Acquino period indicated the growing inclination towards democratic electoral politics and translated into loss of support for the CPP/NPA because they boycotted the elections. Yet over 40 years of continued existence and the ability the CPP/NPA still has to influence the politico-security situation in the Philippines is a simple measure of the significant level of popular support it enjoys.

Why, then, is an insurgency as popular and as persistent as the CPP/NPA not able to achieve the ultimate goals of the revolution? How did it end up losing the popular support it was enjoying? It is clear that loss of popular support compounded with other factors led to its failure. But more important is the question of what led to the loss in popular support. Is there a visible and tangible reason for the loss of popular support for the CPP/NPA? We saw that the ruthless terrorist methods used by the Shining Path and its emphasis on a military victory alienated the population from the insurgency. But the decline in popular support for the CPP/NPA was not because of its violence but rather because of the availability of speedy, alternative means of expressing dissent.

The movement gained popularity by exploiting the socioeconomic grievances, the inequalities experienced by the rural peasants, and by presenting a viable alternative to the corrupt state led by Marcos. The insurgency played on the "inequalities of the existing landowning system, the insensitivity of the Marcos regime to the interest of poor farmers, the arbitrary and repressive local political and administrative structure, and the abuse of the military."[148] The CPP/NPA further used both persuasion and coercion to a

[147] Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books Inc., 2005), 93-96.

[148] Rutten, "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA," 110–113.

varying extent depending upon the circumstances. The insurgency made efforts to convince the peasants that the insurgent organization was committed to the peasants cause by appealing to the workers family interests and at the same time worked to incite cultural activism amongst the youths.[149] It also used the coercive methods of monitoring and sanctioning in the villages including punitive actions and terrorism.

The support gradually declined once the democratic regime of Mrs. Acquino came to power. The effective counterinsurgency campaign of the government slowly negated the coercive power of the CPP/NPA elements in rural areas, and as people started to feel less fear the support diminished. Similarly, the possibility of the resolution of socioeconomic problems through democratic governance led to a split in the CPP/NPA leadership with the moderates joining mainstream politics. The new government "expanded maneuvering space to elites, military, and the political left."[150] The CPP/NPA, rather than exploiting the open space to address the problems of the rural poor and the peasants, chose to continue the armed struggle. This came as a betrayal to the peasants who were expecting them to fulfill their previous commitments. The CPP/NPA's decision not to participate in parliamentary politics signaled that the immediate interests of the lower class were in fact sacrificed.[151]

The CPP/NPA's loss of popular support can be explained in two ways. First is the loss of the coercive power that it used to exact subordination and support to the growing capability of the state apparatus, and second is the sense of betrayal felt by the peasants. By rejecting political participation the CPP/NPA chose not to influence the policies impacting the peasants. The second reason is very important as it relates to the importance of meeting popular expectations expeditiously in the twenty-first century through political participation. However, the Maoist dogma of complete transformation only through seizure of power prevented the party from doing so.

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[149] Rutten, "Popular Support for the Revolutionary Movement CPP-NPA," 130–141.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

H. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The CPP/ NPA leadership was also affected by a lack of resources because of the changes in the international environment. Without countries such as the Soviet Union or China backing them, the CPP/NPA needed to raise funds from other sources. The CPP currently relies heavily on extortion, and the NPA has become its primary financial source. The CPP funds itself by collecting "revolutionary taxes through the NPA;" skimming money off nongovernmental organizations sympathetic to the left; providing protection for criminal activities like extortion, kidnapping, drug trafficking, dollar counterfeiting, and illegal logging; extorting protection money from public officials; and siphoning money from projects funded with foreign money.[152]

The need for twenty-first century communist insurgencies to be financially self-reliant challenges them in many ways. First, ideology is becoming less and less compelling both for recruitment or extraction of external support because of its worldwide decline. Second, the sources of finance required to support the activities of the party and the armed wing are limited. The insurgency primarily depends upon taxation from the rural populace who themselves do not have enough money, and this further antagonizes the population. As Magno puts it "sites of the protracted war is rural areas, characterized by weak agricultural production, where the communist movement is largely distrusted by the wealthier classes and where the guerilla army operates precisely where the communities are the poorest, unable to support their own subsistence, much less adopt an orphaned revolutionary army."[153]

If the economic condition of the party is poor then the insurgents find it difficult to abide by the Maoist populist code. The NPA, however, tries to maintain a balance by performing certain "services" for the communities such as warning philandering husbands, summarily executing rustlers and rapists, returning stolen items, intimidating landlords, and many other services. In return, they collect "revolutionary taxes."[154] The

[152] Cecil Morella, "Military Uses New Tactics on and off the Battlefield," in *Business World*, 3 February 2006, quoted in Magno, "The Insurgency that Would Not Go Away," 313–327.

[153] Magno, "The Insurgency that Would Not Go Away" 321.

[154] Ibid.

funds thus raised are not sufficient to support the insurgency. In addition, the effects are negative because ultimately the poor people are the ones who are being taxed. The insurgency thus needs alternative means of generating finances, which forces them to establish a connection with organized criminal groups and the NPA is not an exception. The NPA has also collected protection money from illegal loggers in the past, and they continue to do so.[155] Additionally, they have been collecting taxes from road-building contractors. This criminal activity does a disservice to the insurgency first because it provides the government with a legitimate excuse for repression, and second because it results in the loss of popular support.

The NCP-M in Nepal, on the other hand, joined mainstream politics while it was ahead in the economic race. It was believed that they amassed a huge amount of money through extortion and bank robberies.[156] However, they managed to mobilize a significant amount of money during the election of the constituent assembly, which gave them some advantage in the Nepalese environment.

I. LEADERSHIP

Although the leadership is one of the most influential factors in leading any insurgency, tensions between the goals of the leadership and its foot soldiers often exist. The leadership is usually made up of middle or upper class "alienated intellectuals" who are strongly committed to the ideals of Marxism and Leninism, whereas the soldiers are primarily "estranged peasants" committed to armed struggle as the means to obtain a degree of social justice.[157] This inherent contradiction between the goals of the leadership and the followers is not uncommon in Maoist insurgencies. The followers expect quick deliverance and direct redress of their problems, but the leaders focus on seizure of power and total transformation, which are more difficult to achieve. In the end, ideology takes primacy among the leaders and their peasant comrades start to appear as "new class" to the leaders. This explains the famous purges carried out by Mao in China during the

[155] Magno, "The Insurgency that Would Not Go Away" 321.

[156] The Maoist had looted as many as 42 district level commercial and agricultural banks between May 2000 and Apr 2003 as cited in a Nepalese Army Briefing to Defense Attaches.

[157] Marks, *Maoist Insurgencies since Vietnam,* 144.

Cultural Revolution and later copied by Pol Pot in Cambodia. The CPP/NPA also fell to similar urges when it purged many of its leaders, military commanders, and members during the rectification campaign. This highlights both the importance of leadership in guiding the approach of the insurgency and in internalizing the aspirations of its followers.

As we observed in the previous chapter, the Shining Path's weakness was the unquestioned authority of Guzman who preached a pure form of ideological thought. A similar trend can be seen in the CPP/NPA actions once they decided on rectification of the party. Sison and his lieutenants were able to lead the party towards Maoist orthodoxy. This became evident when the 1992 Central Committee document castigated "ultra-democracy, liberalism, populism, social democracy and Gorbachevism." The influence of Sison was strong in the strategic approach of the CPP, and he remained dogmatic. However, Marks points out that whatever success was achieved by the party was built upon operational and tactical flexibility, which occurred in Sison's absence.[158]

Sison, in his "revolutionary bible," said that "there is no solution to the peasant problem but to wage armed struggle, conduct agrarian revolution and build revolutionary base areas." [159] Similarly, Sison called the old communist cadres "revisionists" and "teachers by negative example," which demonstrates his scorn for the institutional left. His insistence on guerilla action in rural areas until the populace was adequately politicized left less room for carrying out other forms of action such as urban mobilization.[160] But, the big question is, when and how does the leadership know that an adequate foundation has been built for the final push to begin?

The leadership of the CPP/NPA was clearly divided at the time the decision was taken to rectify the errors of the party. Kessler argues that the debate centered on the key question of whether to continue the "armed struggle" that emphasized the NPA, or the

[158] Thomas A. Marks, "From the Front Lines of the GWOT, CPP Alive and Well in the Philippines," in *The Journal of Counterterrorism and Homeland Security International*, 13, no. 3 (Summer, 2007): 1–7.

[159] Amado Guerro, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, (Hong Kong: Ta Kung Pao, 1971), 280.

[160] Ibid.

"political struggle" that emphasized electoral and cause-oriented politics.[161] In its ultimate dilemma, the executive committee of the CPP's Central Committee took the decision to boycott the election. As Weekley documents, the vote of the executive committee was also divided. Three members voted for the boycott and two members voted against it. Similarly, the conclusions were different on the regional level as well.[162] This difference in analysis and subsequent strategy pursued by the insurgency were to have serious implications on its future.

First, the decision resulted in polarization and subsequent splits throughout the CPP and thus weakened the party politically. Abinale argues that, had the CPP leadership decided to encourage participation in the elections, the party would have avoided its present predicament.[163] The decision to boycott contributed to a further divide in the party, especially when it became apparent that a huge population enthusiastically participated in the elections even in the areas under CPP/NPA influence.[164] Second, the boycott of the election assisted in the collapse of the Marcos regime. This regime was then replaced by a more popular and democratic government that further weakened the CPP/NPA cause.

J. NEGOTIATIONS

The primary question, for the purpose of this study, is to determine the approach taken by the insurgency based upon its attitude towards negotiation. The negotiations were ongoing as early as 1986. The Aquino government held peace talks from 1986–1992, then the Fidel Ramos government continued negotiations from 1992–1998. Joseph Estrada also initiated talks during his tenure from 1998–2001. The government of Gloria

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[161] Guerro, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, 52.

[162] Olle Tornquist, "Democracy and the Philippine Left," in *Kasarinlan*, 6, no. 1 and 2 (1990): 1–27.

[163] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contemporary Philippine Leftist Politics," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*, eds. Patricio N. Abinales (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996), 18.

[164] Ibid., 19.

Macapagal-Arroyo suspended negotiations and ordered military operations against the insurgents in the wake of the 9/11 incidents. All the efforts to arrive at a negotiated settlement failed for a variety of reasons.

Negotiations did not bear much fruit partly due to "policy inconsistencies in successive governments" and their preoccupation with "political survival." On the other hand, the CPP/NPA also viewed negotiation as a part of the governments "divide and rule ploy."[165] The shifting strategies of the government and the insurgents only reinforced the existing mistrust between the two. While mistrust played a larger role in failed negotiations early on, the global war on terrorism further complicated the matter by blurring the lines between insurgency and terrorism. Soliman M. Santos Jr. comments that the "global war on terrorism caused significant damage to the Philippine peace process to end these conflicts."[166] In 1998, a four-point agreement was reached and a substantive agreement in respect to International Humanitarian Law and human rights was signed. However, the 9/11 incidents in the U.S. disrupted any possibility of further negotiations, and even the agreed framework of the JMC (Joint Monitoring Committee) achieved under the facilitation of the government of Norway could not further the stalled peace process.[167] While the war on terrorism may seem to have damaged the peace process by hardening the government's military response, its contribution in persuading the insurgents to seek political alternatives should not be discounted.

At a cursory glance, it appears that negotiations were never ruled out either by the CPP/NPA and its political front NDF or the various governments, but hardliners on both sides seem to have prevailed over the ones arguing for negotiations. The military was able to convince the government to adopt a militarist approach in order to further their "corporate interests," whereas the CPP/NPA remained "oriented towards its program of people's war."[168] There is evidence that suggests that an element within the CPP/NPA

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[165] Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 405–431.

[166] Soliman M Santos Jr., "Counter-Terrorism and Peace Negotiation with Philippine Rebel Groups," in *Critical Studies in Terrorism*, 3, no. 1 (July, 2010): 137–154.

[167] Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 428–429.

[168] Ibid.

advocated genuine negotiations. The cadres in the Visyas and in Manila are quoted as having disagreed about the decision to not negotiate, and they criticized the party's "tactical or utilitarian" view of negotiation as merely an extension of the armed struggle.[169]

Peace negotiations between the government of the Philippines and the CPP/NPA/NDF, although encouraging, lack substantial progress over the years. It appears that political negotiation have always been a part of the CPP/NPA strategy, but it is difficult to determine whether the negotiations were carried out with a genuine intent to terminate the conflict or just to gain a tactical advantage. Thus it is critical to determine just when the insurgent group is truly and genuinely interested in resolution of the problem through negotiation. Looking into the continued pursuit of a pure Maoist ideology, there is little hope that the CPP/NPA/NDF is seeking to resolve the issue through negotiation.

K. ANALYSIS OF THE OVERALL APPROACH AND CONCLUSIONS

The CPP/NPA is surviving, but it doesn't appear to be capable of delivering a decisive blow to the Philippine government. Although it enjoys a good deal of consistent popular support, a relatively disciplined guerrilla army, and a political network capable of implementing an effective united front strategy, the possibility of the CPP/NPA making good political gains either through negotiation and political participation or by a violent military move does not seem likely at the moment. This is despite the fact that, the Philippine state has been declining due to "continued political instability and economic problems" and is unable to genuinely and permanently address the socioeconomic grievances of the masses.[170]

The odds are still against the CPP/NPA because it can no longer count on foreign support. The world community has had a serious rethink on the issue of the legitimacy of violence post-9/11, and, as a result, violent insurrection movements like the CPP/NPA

[169] Mirian Coronel Ferer, The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, 421.

[170] Marks, "From the Front Lines of GWOT," 6.

are labeled as terrorist organizations by the international community. The U.S. already lists it as a terrorist organization, which makes it difficult to gain international legitimacy.

Lack of external resources is also forcing it to use extortion and illegal activities to raise funds, which will further alienate it from the masses. The counterinsurgency capability of the Philippine government is gradually increasing and a trickledown effect of the socioeconomic progress in general keeps the masses interested in electoral politics more than the proposed communist alternative. The grievances and framings once very popular are losing their appeal and resources are not easily forthcoming, which will make it difficult for the CPP/NPA to achieve success unless it changes its current approach.

Although the CPP/NPA is clearly adopting a much more pragmatic approach than the Shining Path, it still appears to be obsessed with the idea of a pure revolution through armed movement. Party ideology has been restored to strict Maoism, which denies them the opportunity to exploit political openings. The failure of the party to sustain popular support, the failure of its leadership to adapt to new political opportunities, and the reluctance to negotiate for political change and peace all appear to be the product of the rigidity of its military-dominant approach. Magno argues that in an attempt to maintain ideological purity through a centralized leadership, the CPP suffered serious setbacks. It can neither prevent the erosion of its cadre base nor can it exercise effective political control over its spread-out NPA units. In reality, the NPA has been exercising greater autonomy in making decisions and taking actions, and this has shifted the balance in favor of the military over politics.[171] Similarly, its rejection of the "politico-military" orientation as proposed by the Manila-Rijal Party Committee back in 1991 for the primacy of armed struggle has been a true indication of the party's reluctance to adopt politics as the dominant approach.[172]

The CPP/NPA's rigid Maoist orientation is a decisive factor shaping its involvement in electoral politics.[173] Its incorporation of the Leninist principle of

[171] Magno, "The Insurgency That Would not Go away," 319.

[172] Ferrer, "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," 421.

[173] Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, "Beyond Boycott," in *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986,* ed. Patricio N. Abinales (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996), 18.

"democratic centralism," that encourages autocratic imposition of the party principles and discourages a constructive debate about the relevance of Marxism, has led to further ideological rigidity. At the same time, its current relative isolation from other communist movements across the globe also hinders it in the adoption of a flexible approach. Although the political arm of the movement engages the government in negotiations, neither side is considered to be serious about reaching a negotiated political settlement.[174]

In the meantime, the CPP/NPA adopted a peculiar strategy during the 2004 election called the "permit to campaign" (PTC) policy. It allows safe access for political parties to the rebel-controlled territory in exchange for money, weapons, or other materials and is very controversial.[175] Although it is condemned by many as a form of extortion, the NPA practices it openly as "revolutionary taxation."[176] This brings an interesting question to the fore: What motivates the CPP/NPA to reject participation in the electoral process but authorizes it to facilitate the same in lieu of money? It could be explained that this is a rational choice dictated by circumstances. Since the CPP/NPA does not possess enough strength to seriously disrupt the election, it appears that the CPP/NPA has decided to exploit the election in order to consolidate its financial and material base.

Democracy in the twenty-first century presents insurgencies with a very peculiar dilemma. Insurgents gain when they confront authoritarian and unresponsive governments, but they tend to lose their voices and have a hard time making their approach acceptable and palatable to a population that finds electoral politics to be a viable alternative means to seek redress to their grievances. Once the CPP/NPA decided to ignore politics, its decline began. Marks accentuates the idea that democracy makes insurgencies very vulnerable by saying "not only must it contend with rivals for political following but it must justify to prospective recruits why they should risk death." In the

[174] Patrick Patino and Djorina Velasco, "Violence and Voting in post-1986 Philippines," in *The Politics of Death: Political Violence in Southeast Asia*, eds. Aurel Croissant, Sascha Kneip, Beate Martin (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006), 240-241.

[175] Ibid., 241.

[176] Ibid., 233.

end, the CPP sulked out of politics and adopted a militarist approach for its survival. This approach has been counterproductive both in terms of a loss of popular support and the inability to decisively contest the Philippine state.

On the other hand, the NCP-M in Nepal exploited all possible political opportunities to rise to power and influence. Although there is a huge debate over whether it is becoming more revisionist and hence selling out the revolution, or whether it is making progress, the NCP-M for the time being appears firmly on the balanced politico-military approach based upon a fusion of "bourgeoisie and people's" democracy.[177] The failure of the CPP/NPA in the Philippines might have served well to the Nepalese Maoists as a reminder of the futility of a military-dominant approach against a strong state in an unfavorable domestic and international context.

[177] Basnet, "Maoists: Status Quoists or What?"

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IV. THE NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY-MAOIST (NCP-M)

A. INTRODUCTION

The insurgency in Nepal led by the NCP-M offers new insights on the development and practice of the Maoist ideology and raises important questions on the utility of classic Maoism and Mao's people's war strategy in the current global conditions. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal is the youngest communist insurgency that developed against a democratic government in a rapidly democratizing world. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal is similar to the insurgencies in Peru and Philippines in terms of environment, grievances and ideological orientation but is a sharp contrast with them in terms of outcome. While other insurgencies remained focused on the goal of overthrowing the state by delivering military defeat and failed, the NCP-M constantly revisited Maoism and oscillated its strategy between political and military means, and it ultimately opted for a negotiated settlement.

In this chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate that pragmatic politics was the predominant component in the approach taken by the insurgency waged by NCP-M. I will do so by analyzing the NCP-M's ideology and subsequent shifts, nature of the political objectives set out, the dominant thoughts of the leadership towards negotiation, external mediation, and political participation within the setting of initiation, development, and conclusion of the insurgency. I will compare the approach taken by the NCP-M to the classic approach taken by other insurgencies to establish a link between the approach and the final outcome of the insurgency.

I will demonstrate how the NCP-M, following a Maoist people's war strategy at least initially, reached a position of political dominance through innovative additions and modifications to the classical Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist ideology. I will also show how an insurgent movement can end in relative triumph if it exercises political flexibility and adaptability in response to the limitations and constraints faced by insurgencies of the twenty-first century.

B. BACKGROUND

Similar to the Shining Path in Peru, the NCP-M in Nepal also began their armed movement against a democratically elected government that was installed after an absolute monarchy collapsed against the third wave of democracy. The "declaration of an end of (communist) ideology," the lack of external support, and the supposed power of democracy to provide alternate means of protest did not prevent the Maoists from beginning and developing the insurgency.[178] Once in motion, the insurgency spread quickly and soon threatened to take over the Nepalese state. The ten-year-long insurgency claimed more than 13,000 lives and resulted in the destruction of billions of dollars worth of infrastructure. The insurgency finally ended when a comprehensive peace agreement was reached between the NCP-M and the government. The agreement co-opted major demands of the NCP-M such as the abolishment of the Monarchy and election to a constituent assembly. The NCP-M later participated in the constituent assembly elections and was able to secure the highest number of seats in the assembly. It then led the government for nine months before the party chairman and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, alias Prachanda (the fierce one), resigned.

Although a communist insurgency in some form existed in Nepal from the early 1950s, it officially came into being with the declaration of people's war by the NCP-M on February 13, 1996. The NCP-M is a breakaway faction led by Prachanda from the Communist Party of Nepal, Unity Center (CPN-UC), which was a conglomeration of three different communist parties.[179] The new party, during its third plenum in March 1995, decided to call itself the Nepal Communist Party (Maoists). This was a clear declaration of its ideological tilt towards Maoism. They also determined that all other left parties were revisionists and decided to "concentrate all efforts for the development of a people's war" to bring in a new people's democratic form of government.[180]

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[178] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," 1.

[179] Deepak Thapa and Bandita Sijapati, *A Kingdom under Seize: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency: 1996 to 2003*, (Kathmandu: the Print house, 2003), 43.

[180] Ibid., 45.

In February 1996, the UPFN (United People's Front, Nepal), the open political wing of the NCP-M, submitted its demands to the government in a 40-point document. The demands related to nationalism, people's democracy, and livelihood and included an ultimatum stating that the UPFN would initiate insurgency if the demands were not met. The demands encompassed both the genuine grievances related to ending discriminatory land rights and declaring Nepal a secular state, and they also included some utopian ideals such as employment for all. [181] When the government failed to provide a response, the party went underground and started its preparation of political teachings and propaganda from the rural, Midwestern district of Rolpa. In October 1996, the government ordered a police-led operation against the Maoists after a clash between the cadres of UPFN/NCP-M and the Nepali Congress, which further prepared the ground for armed movement.[182]

The insurgents intensified their momentum in 2000 by attacking and displacing police outposts and government infrastructures in various parts of the country. By November 2001 the Maoist armed wing had already become so strong and daring that it was able to attack and capture an army subunit location. The government quickly declared a state of emergency and mobilized the Nepalese Army against the insurgency in November 2001.[183] Despite the mobilization of the Nepalese Army against the insurgents, the Maoists were able to extend their influence in 31 of the 75 districts in Nepal. At this time the government stated that four of the districts were highly influenced by the insurgents and the rest of the districts were partially influenced by the end of 2001.[184] By 2002 the Maoists de facto controlled a significant portion of the nation and were still expanding their political influence. Their level of influence can

[181] Lawoti, "The Evolution and Growth of Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," 7.

[182] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency,* 48.

[183] Ibid., 45–49.

[184] Ibid., 46.

be summed up by the fact that the Maoists "Zone of action" covered all 75district centers, they had declared "people's government" in a number of districts, they were running "people's court," and they controlled the basic health and educational services.[185]

As is not unusual in an insurgency, there was a vast difference in how the government, the Maoists, and independent observers reported the Maoist capability. Paul Moorcraft places the number of rebel forces around 15,000 with part-time cadres of about 50,000, whereas the government of Nepal estimated the number to be 4,000 to 5,000 and 15,000.[186] Regardless of the numbers, it was a known fact that the Maoist armed wing was successful in challenging the government forces at a place of their choosing, regardless of the outcome of it. The situation was perceived to be so grave that observers were starting to feel that the Nepalese Army and the government would not be able to prevent a Maoist victory in Nepal.[187] Although the government forces were able to operate in any of the districts freely, the Maoists de facto controlled the daily lives of the people in the absence of administrative mechanisms and government presence in many of the districts across the country.

Multiple attempts at negotiation between the government and the NCP-M failed primarily due to the inability of those governments to make decisions on the issues presented by the Maoists. Also, no government was able to stay in power for a sustained period of time due to interparty and intraparty conflicts. In the meantime, the infamous royal massacre of June 2001, in which most members of the royal family were killed, brought King Gyanendra to the throne. Unlike his brother, King Birendra, who remained within constitutional norms, King Gyanendra dismissed the elected prime minister in February 2005, imprisoned political leaders, and assumed direct rule when asked by the prime minister to postpone the impending general election. The alienated political parties organized as the SPA (Seven Party Alliance) and then formed an antimonarchy alliance with the Maoists. In a calculated move, the Maoists declared a ceasefire in September

[185] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency*, 48.

[186] Paul Moorcraft, "Revolution in Nepal: Can the Nepalese Army Prevent a Maoist Victory?" *RUSI Journal*, 151, no. 5 (October 2006): 46.

[187] Ibid.

2005 and supported the street protests of the SPA with the hopes of ending the autocratic monarchy and electing a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. Interestingly, the negotiations and agreement were mediated not by domestic actors but by neighboring India.[188] The joint protests ultimately forced King Gyanendra on April 2006 to give up direct rule and reinstate the parliament he had dismissed earlier. The reinstated parliament led by Girija Prasad Koirala signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the NCP-M in November 2006. After 12 long years of insurgency, the NCP-M finally put down its weapons and entered into mainstream politics with shared participation in the new government. Although the peace process is still incomplete and the NCP-M is currently struggling to get back to power in Nepal, it was successful in forcing the government to accommodate its demands and in becoming the largest party in the constituent assembly elections.[189]

What is unique about the NCP-M is that it was successful in inciting and developing its people's war against a democratically elected government in adverse regional and international contexts. In addition, unlike other insurgencies, it used the element of violence to further its aims only in a selective manner and as long as the utilization of violence was deemed necessary. It also exploited the strategy of united front to carry forward its open activities and made political alliances with legal parties whenever expedient. Also, it was able to gain from the intervention of a regional power and international community favoring its own position. This is an unprecedented example of both a Maoist insurgency embracing pragmatic politics and the selective use of violence because of an accurate assessment of local, regional, and global conditions to reach a position of power. In summary, the NCP-M was able to execute a balanced politico-military approach to insurgency that was not seen in the other two Maoist insurgencies.

[188] Ali Riaz and Subho Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal*, (New York: Lexington books, 2007), 23.

[189] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal*, 23–35.

C. GRIEVANCES LEADING TO THE INSURGENCY

Adhikary argues that, although it is difficult to fathom the Maoist decision to begin people's war while adequate space was available in the democratic system, the insurgency received support primarily because of the frustration of the common people with the ability of the democratic system to fulfill their expectations.[190] Lawoti attributes the factors of poverty, sociocultural and economic inequality, and exclusionary characteristics of the state as the primary contributors.[191] There is little argument about the fact that the degeneration of the democratic political culture expressed in terms of intraparty feuds for power combined with the inability of the state to address serious socioeconomic problems remained at the heart of the insurgency.

Although the sociopolitical and economic conditions of Nepal in the 1990s appeared to be improving, they were in fact conducive to revolutionary movements. Thapa argues that although democracy came to Nepal in 1990, there had been many years of consistent communist indoctrination in certain parts of rural Nepal, especially the four districts of Midwestern Nepal (Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, and Jajarkot) combined with the hardship and state neglect suffered by the population in those areas. These factors meant that the country had already been "primed for a revolutionary movement."[192]

Politically, it would appear that the population should not have supported the insurgency in 1990 because the nation had just emerged from a long period of absolute monarchy and was practicing parliamentary democracy under a liberal constitution. But many felt that the revolution was incomplete because the 1990 constitution, which represented the democratic change, was a compromise between the monarchy and the political parties.[193] This compromise, it is argued, resulted in the retention of many traditional, feudal, illiberal, and discriminatory political characteristics. The Nepali Congress government "did little during its governance to deal with issues facing the

[190] Bipin Adhikary, "The Context of Conflict and Human Rights in Nepal," in *Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Challenges before Nepal: Rishikesh Shaha Memorial Lectures 2003*, 1–55, ed., Bipin Adhikary, (National Human Rights Commission, 2003).

[191] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," 7–24.

[192] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize*, 53–81.

[193] Adhikary, "The Context of Conflict and Human Rights Violation in Nepal," 16.

nation," and was involved largely in an intraparty power struggle.[194] Additionally, the main opposition left-wing party, the United Marxist Leninist (UML), still had an unfulfilled republican agenda in their party manifesto. This was while even liberal democratic parties were uneasy with the monarch's power, especially with his ability to control the Nepalese Army.[195]

Economically, Nepal remained in extremely poor conditions despite a degree of growth and progress. The economic problem was, however, not the immediate product of democratic governance but was inherited from the past because of the centralized economic system that retained feudal characteristics.[196] The Nepalese economy had not been doing well since the 1960s and the 1970s; however, what led to the insurgent outburst was the inability of the new democratic system to address the already existing grievances. The Gross National Income (GNI) of Nepal per capita was U.S. $290.00 in 2006, which was the lowest in South Asia except for Afghanistan.[197] Over 40 percent of the people were living below the poverty line and did not have access to basic services. Whatever development and distribution of resources the new democratic structure brought, especially in the banking sector, they were accessed by the rich and did not trickle down to the poor. Lawoti and Pahari argue that although national economic indicators improved, economic inequality also increased with Nepal becoming the most unequal country in South Asia.[198]

Socially, many issues of inequality and discrimination continued to exist in the democratic period, which led to further alienation of the marginalized people. Land ownership had remained a lingering unresolved issue from the Nepali land reform economics. Despite efforts from the various governments of the past, a large number of peasants still did not have property rights. Minority and ethnic groups were not happy with the declaration of the nation as the only Hindu kingdom in the world and the

[194] Adhikary, "The Context of Conflict and Human Rights Violation in Nepal," 16.

[195] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize*, 59.

[196] Ibid., 67.

[197] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency, 7.

[198] Ibid.

continuation of the fact that the Hindu upper caste dominated state politics and resulted in further marginalization of the minorities. This was well-exploited by the Maoists to mobilize the underprivileged ethnic groups from the landmasses of the rural Midwestern hills where the government presence was nominal.[199] The upper caste Hindu elite continued to dominate the political parties and hold important portfolios in the government bureaucracy and civil service, and they were prominent in the state police and the armed forces.[200] This made available a large base of disgruntled people as a potential resource for social mobilization.

Repression and state weakness also added momentum to the movement. The police actions at the beginning of the insurgency were alleged to be characterized by random arrests, torture, alleged rape, and even extra-judicial killings that led to the alienation of a large segment of the population, increased the support for the NCP-M, and provided the NCP-M with recruits.[201] Similarly, the Nepalese Army operations also drew a lot of criticism for their disregard for human rights. Analysts were quick to point out that the rise of the movement was largely due to the "failure of democratic governments to implement viable socioeconomic reforms and an effective counterinsurgency strategy."[202]

Despite the advent of democracy and the introduction of a free market economy, the nation largely remained discriminatory in terms of addressing the issues of political representation and socio-cultural inequality. Similarly, the economy remained centralized, and the divide between the center and the periphery grew further. Marks noted that given such socioeconomic divisions, politics should have played a more significant role, but unfortunately Nepal was also mired in the all-too-familiar problems of emerging democracies.[203] The failure of the democratic government to address the pressing issues of historic neglect and discrimination towards the rural communities and

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[199] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost ? State Failure in Nepal,* 129–138.

[200] Ibid., 8.

[201] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize*, 48.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Thomas A. Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," monograph for Strategic Studies Institute (December 2003):1–40 http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub49.pdf (accessed November 7, 2010).

breach the gap of social inequality contributed highly to the successful prospect of framing these grievances in communist ideological alternatives for the insurgents. [204]

The NCP-M ably tapped into the grievances of all sections of the society, and especially the peasants, by using attractive slogans such as "land for the tillers." Interestingly, democracy, which was supposed to deliver both socio sociopolitically and economically, in fact acted as an agent for the insurgency because on the one hand it represented cronyism, corruption, and continuation of the same order and thus assisted the insurgents in convincing the populace that they had a better ideological alternative.[205] On the other hand it allowed the insurgents to freely carry out their propaganda and political organizing activities within the liberal environment. In summary, there are many similarities in the grievances that were available as a resource for Maoist mobilization in Peru, the Philippines, and Nepal. The Nepalese case differs from the other two only in the way the insurgents were able to craft and sell their idea of an alternative structure that would address the grievances.

D. IDEOLOGY

The NCP-M claims that its ideology, since 1986, is Marxism-Leninism and Maoism (MLM).[206] The party later adopted the "Plan for the historic initiation of the People's war" in September 1995, which clearly laid out the theoretical premises of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism with primary emphasis on the practice of Mao's people's war doctrine. The paper also spoke of refraining from any form of deviations like "economism, reformism and anarchism" and concentrated on capture of state power through armed struggle and nothing less.[207] The plan specifically mentions the idea of "marching to communism" and considers armed struggle as the primary means to achieve

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[204] R. Andrew Nickson, "Democratization and the Growth of Communism in Nepal," in *Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal,* ed. Deepak Thapa (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003), 3–33.

[205] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 5.

[206] Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), interview by Li Onesto, "Red Flag Flying on the Roof of the World," *Revolutionary Worker*, no. 1043, February 20, 2000: 181–222, cited in *Understanding the Maoist Movement in Nepal*, eds., Deepak Thapa (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003).

[207] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize* 46–48.

it. The peasants were to be the primary agents of change along with other "laboring masses."[208] The paper also outlined a clear strategy of building a revolutionary united front and a revolutionary army under the leadership of the party. This is indicative of its positive attitude towards the united front strategy and willingness to employ the armed wing as the major tool to achieve its objective. It also indicates that the political wing is to exercise greater control of the military wing.

The NCP-M had begun their insurgency based upon the classical Maoist approach. In the "third plenum" of the breakaway faction led by Prachanda, the Central Committee stated that "the People's war will be based on the lessons of Marxism-Leninism and Maoist regarding revolutionary violence … process of protracted people's war based on the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside … reiterating its eternal commitment to the theory of people's war developed by Mao as the universal and invincible Marxist theory of war."[209] Similarly, the party also stated that the basic objective of the revolution was to smash the state of dictatorship of the feudal comprador and bureaucratic capitalist classes and replace it with a new democratic one.[210] These comments demonstrate the early tilt of the NCP-M, which can be called ideologically orthodox for a Maoist movement.

But at the same time there existed an influence of "opportunism" in its ideology as practiced by Lenin. The plan, quoting Lenin, explicitly stated that the party would be able to lead the people's war only by "correctly grasping the law of contradiction of transformation of wrong into right," which was in response to the acknowledgement that the people's war would ultimately develop in unusual and complex situations.[211] Recognition of the constraints in pursuing the revolution in the classic sense allowed the NCP-M to remain flexible in its approach, which is unique to the movement. Although

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[208] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seize* 46–48.

[209] Decision of the Plenum published in the mouthpiece of the NCP-M "*the worker*" June 1996, cited by Deepak Thapa in, "Radicalism and the Emergence of the Maoists," in *The Himalayan People's War: Nepal's Maoist rebellion*, ed. Michael Hutt, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 42.

[210] Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, interview by *WPRM (World People's Resistance Movement)*, October 26, 2009, http://www.wprmbritain.org/?p=926 (accessed 5/10/2010).

[211] Thapa, "Radicalism and the Emergence of the Maoists," 44.

primacy of contextual factors in the development of the movement were recognized by both the Shining Path and the CPP/NPA, the NCP-M alone was able to truly adapt to the complexity of the situations by remaining flexible.

This ideological flexibility was a matter of debate in the NCP-M and the Nepalese communist movement from early on. Reacting to criticism that by making innovations to the MLM way of thinking the party had become revisionist, Prachanda explained that the difference between revisionism and MLM lies in recognizing that ideology is not static but dynamic. He then equated ideological development with "breaking with continuation and rupture to make a leap," clarifying that MLM is not reformism based upon gradualism but a true revolutionary ideology.[212] Till this point the NCP-M appeared to be influenced by the same ideological dogma as other communist movements. However, it had a definite recognition that traditional communist ideologies needed a new interpretation based upon a better understanding of the contextual factors.

The plan also had an international agenda. The NCP-M considered itself an integral part of the "world proletarian revolution" that would serve the global revolution, and it sought to contribute to the further development of the "Revolutionary International Movement (RIM)."[213] The NCP-M had drawn lessons from communist movements across the world and primarily from the Shining Path and the Indian Naxal movements, and it tried to share ideas and resources with them. Although the party later drew criticism from the RIM for participating in the peace process, initially it considered the RIM to be an organization that represented proletarian internationalism, thus Prachanda comments, "If people's war in Nepal faces setbacks, then it will not only be a question for the NCP-M but a direct question for the RIM as a whole."

E. SHIFTS IN IDEOLOGY

The NCP-M embarked on a pragmatic path only after its second National Conference in 2001. The decisions of the conference were crucial because they empowered the party chairman tremendously by declaring that the "guiding thought of

[212] Prachanda interview.

[213] Ibid.

the Party from now onwards will be Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda Path."[214] The paper presented by Prachanda during the conference not only clarified the party's position and policies towards various groups of the society such as women, students, workers, and peasants, but the paper also proposed a way to begin a dialogue with different sections of society. The dialogue would be held as a "conference of all political parties, organizations, and representatives of mass organizations, elections of an interim government by such a conference; and guarantee of people's constitution under the leadership of the interim government." The NCP-M justified the various rounds of negotiation and the three key demands as the keys to achieving the objectives. Adoption of the Prachanda Path provided the NCP-M an avenue to escape unrealistic classical methods of Maoism. The Prachanda Path was to assume a kind of revolution that would be a fusion of the Chinese model of protracted war (taken up in the beginning) and the Russian model of general armed insurrection but in reality it was a modification of the overall Maoist idea of the continuation and conclusion of the revolution.[215]

This was a major change in the approach of the NCP-M, which had previously vehemently opposed partial reforms or reaching a compromise with the reactionary classes. This was important because it not only publicized the demands of the NCP-M clearly, paving the way for future negotiations and peaceful resolution of the conflict, but it also indicated a shift in its ideological dogma of waging a protracted people's war in purely military terms.

The NCP-M arrived at some major decisions during the meeting of its Central Committee held in the Chunbang village of the Rukum district in the Midwestern region of Nepal during September and October of 2005. Amidst growing debate between the senior leadership about whether to join with the parliamentary parties against the monarchy for the establishment of a federal republic or to join with the nationalist forces

[214] Thapa and Sijapati, *A kingdom Under Seize*, 113–137.

[215] Sudhir Sharma, "The Maoist Movement," in *The Himalayan People's War: Nepal's Maoist rebellion,* ed. Michael Hutt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 53–58.

led by the monarchy, the party decided to work with the political parties.[216] This decision was crucial in polarizing the Nepalese political forces and resulted in the elimination of the monarchy, which was one of Nepal's oldest and key centers of power. This is a very good example of the NCP-M grasping political opportunity. While the Shining Path continued to reject any alliances with the legal left in Peru, the NCP-M in Nepal not only joined hands with its revisionary comrades but also with the liberal parties who it used to consider the "enemy" in the past.

The NCP-M leadership has emphasized the need to not "cling to dogma and rather try to apply Marxism to the concrete situation of Nepal."[217] The Balaju (a place in Kathmandu) plenum in 2007 demonstrated the amount of flexibility the party and the leadership were ready to exercise. At this plenum there was heated debate between the hardliners and the moderates about whether to strive for a "people's republic" as outlined in the classic Communist sense or a "democratic republic" of a parliamentary nature.[218] The party adopted the latter in favor of the peace process and the writing of a new democratic constitution in which it indicated its ideological flexibility. The NCP-M came to the conclusion that a bourgeois democratic revolution was first needed to install a bourgeois democratic republic as the political superstructure in Nepal. This was needed in order to replace the feudal structure represented by the monarchy before a "new proletarian democracy" could be achieved.[219]

Maoist leadership sometimes claims that it has not deviated from the people's war strategy and considers this shift to be a part of the strategy, but it is difficult to perceive the Maoist's going back to the battlefield. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, the deputy chairman of the party, in an interview later claimed that although the NCP-M made certain changes in its tactical line after 2006, these changes should not be confused with abandoning protracted people's war forever and the adoption of a peaceful path of social

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[216] Ram Khatri, "The CPN (Maoist)'s Revolutionary Practice," February 2008, http://www.himalmag.com/The-CPN-(Maoist)-s-revolutionary-practice_nw2097.html (accessed September 11, 2010)..

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Dr. Baburam Bhattarai interview.

development. He argues that "People's war is a multifaceted war where both the armed and political form of struggle needs to be combined."[220] He highlights the need for taking note of the existing balance of forces, both politically and militarily in the country and outside the country because this balance will have implications. First, it will be difficult to capture the state power, and second, even after capturing the state power it will be difficult to sustain it.[221] His comments reflect the NCP-M's objective view of the domestic as well as regional and global context, which is a key to understanding the shift in the NCP-M both in terms of ideology and strategy.

Although it is not completely clear what factors prompted the NCP-M to adopt a flexible approach, the changed global context and intraparty debate that favored preserving the achievements of the party gained by the people's war are speculated to be the primary reasons. Marks believes "knowing that NCP-M could not defeat the state, international actors (including India) were initially willing to aid the state" to an extent that the Maoists would be defeated.[222] It was, however, clever on the part of the Maoists to see that while prolonged people's war would have benefited them, its continuation would be futile for the movement's future. It was this reality that drove the Maoist shift in emphasis between its lines of operation.[223] The party meanwhile remained in active debate throughout 2002 and 2003 over whether to join the multiparty politics or not. The negotiations that followed failed for various reasons that will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. It is difficult to ascertain whether the NCP-M was sincere about resolving the issue through negotiation, but it can be implied that the NCP-M was not ideologically averse to the prospect of negotiation. In the end, the NCP-M appears to be cautious of the pitfalls of becoming mired in traditional communist fundamentalism, hence, it chose to change as the socioeconomic and political context of Nepal and the world changed.

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[220] Dr. Baburam Bhattarai interview.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 332.

[223] Ibid.

F. POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

The political objectives of the NCP-M can be summarized as establishing a Maoist people's republic in order to achieve socioeconomic and political transformation of the Nepalese society. While the official documents of the party are somewhat vague and declare that establishment of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is the ultimate objective of the party, the NCP-M had not been able to articulate what it means by that. The party was able to come up with clear demands that reflected its political objectives along with the modality to achieve them during the first round of negotiations itself.

Initially its political demands included an end to the monarchy and the writing of a new constitution through an elected constituent assembly. Similarly, it advocated for an end to capitalist exploitation and establishment of scientific socialism on the economic side. Socially, it demanded a secular Nepal and an end to caste, ethnic, and religious exploitation.[224] Later, the establishment of a federal structure for Nepal was added to the demands as a means to achieve the appropriate devolution of power to various regions. Although the abovementioned objectives appear straightforward and tangible, there is still debate about whether these are the final objectives of the NCP-M since its primary objective is to "establish the dictatorship of the proletariat," which is translated as establishing a single-party communist regime.

It is difficult to determine whether the political approach of the Maoists is a genuine one or just another tactical move. Marks, out of his skepticism, commented that some apologists don't even want to discuss the aim. Marks also draws a parallel with the Sandinistas who used democracy to solidify their Marxist-Leninist version of democracy or the "people's democracy," which is a concrete manifestation of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Prachanda had explained this to be a "serious policy decision" saying that the NCP-M is ready for peaceful competition within a democratic situation.[225] Despite the contradictory nature of remarks made by the Maoist leadership, it is difficult to argue

[224] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 6.

[225] Pushpa Kaml Dahal (Prachanda), interview by Siddarth Varadarajan for *The Hindu*, February 10, 2006, http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/nic/maoist.htm (accessed November 12, 2010).

with the logic that the NCP-M has at the moment shifted the focus of its approach to conventional politics in the light of its current political objectives.

G. UNITED FRONT STRATEGY

The NCP-M, similar to the CPP/NPA, realized the gains of implementing a united front strategy in the Nepalese context. Because of this it established highly coordinated fronts in the form of its sister organizations representing sectors such as students, peasants, workers, trade unions, intellectuals, women, scheduled castes, and indigenous groups. These served two purposes, the first of which was to "bring up class issues from each specialized perspective and to implement restructuring policies while at the same time battle inequality in a way supporting the constituents," and the second of which was to provide the backbone for organizing protests and to work as aggressive pressure groups against the state.[226] The NCP-M also reached agreements with other groups in the society by forming various fronts such as the Terai Madhesi Mukti Morcha (Terai Madhesi Liberation Front) that advocated for the rights of the minority plains people in the South of Nepal and Adhivasi Janajati Mukti Morcha (Indigenous and Ethnic Peoples Liberation Front) working for the rights of the various minority indigenous groups in Nepal.

Furthermore, while the fringe left parties of Nepal were already being attracted to the NCP-M, a new turn of events pushed even the democratic parties towards the Maoists cause. Once the King assumed direct rule by dismissing Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba once again in February 2005, it led to an antimonarchy polarization between democratic parties and the NCP-M. The NCP-M quickly called for a ceasefire and decided to negotiate with the democratic parties who felt betrayed by the same monarchy they were trying to save in the beginning. Marks states that the royal move "provided the NCP-M with the basis for a viable united front," that other Maoist insurgencies either chose to ignore or could not forge.[227] The Seven Party Alliances (SPA), consisting of

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[226] Amanda Snellinger, "Ideology, Identity, and the Maoist Student Union," 76–77, in *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the 21st Century,"* eds., Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari.

[227] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 14.

seven major democratic political parties, and the NCP-M entered into an alliance that was brokered by Delhi (obviously "pursuing geopolitical ends") that simultaneously cut off all military aid to the Nepalese Army including desperately needed ammunitions.[228] The NCP-M was thus able to forge a 12-point agreement with the SPA that would later catapult it to state power. The ability of the NCP-M to convince the legal left and the democratic parties that it had "developed a new maturity" and had reached the conclusion that the "capture of state power through the barrel of the gun" was not possible was a master stroke in terms of exploiting the political approach based upon the evaluation of the military situation.[229]

H. EXTERNAL FACTOR /SUPPORT

Contrary to popular belief, the NCP-M is a homegrown insurgency that did not receive any support from neighboring communist China. In contrast, whatever form of support the Maoists of Nepal were able to derive was from democratic India. Although there is no evidence that the government of India supported the Maoists and India declared the Maoists a terrorist organization even before the Nepalese government did, the NCP-M leaders conspicuously and consistently found safe havens in Indian states.[230] The NCP-M frequently organized meetings at various places in India. One such example was the meeting of communist leaders in West Bengal in 2001. The NCP-M was also able to forge very close relationship with Indian Maoists in both the legal left parties and with the violent Naxals. Deepak Thapa notes that the Nepalese Maoists had received support from Indian ultra-leftists in terms of "shelter and training and possibly access to illegal arms market" in India.[231]

While rejection of any external involvement proved to be a strategic weakness in the Shining Path approach, the withdrawal of foreign support became a major setback to the CPP/NPA. The NCP-M in comparison was able to recognize the potential gains from

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[228] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 24.

[229] Madhav Kumar Nepal, Chairman of the NCP-UML, quoted by Thomas A. Marks in "The Insurgency in Nepal," 32.

[230] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom under Seige,* 173.

[231] Ibid.

external involvement as it saw the lack of legitimacy in the consecutive governments and the monarchy. The NCP-M successfully exploited the concern of the foreign actors, primarily in India, to strike the groundbreaking deal with the SPA that not only neutralized the monarchy and the army but also catapulted the NCP-M to power. The NCP-M, although it publicly criticized India as its final enemy, was constantly in dialogue with the Indian establishment, which was concerned about the Maoist spillover effect in its territory.[232] The NCP-M did not solicit direct foreign support from India but cleverly capitalized on the security concerns that forced India to intervene in a manner that ultimately benefited the insurgents.

The Indian government, concerned by the prospect of the Maoist spillover effect and the possibility of a "red corridor" running across the two countries, initially was in support of the Nepalese government. It not only helped capture prominent Maoist leaders including Chandra Prasad Gajurel, but it also provided the Nepalese army with significant military assistance in fighting the Maoists. Other critical foreign actors have been the members of the Indian "legal left." The leaders of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) were instrumental in bringing the NCP-M and the SPA together. They were also very active in mediating between the NCP-M and the SPA during the later phase of transition from royal rule to the restoration of the dissolved parliament.[233] The Indian state for its part was seen playing an active role not only in facilitating negotiations but also in determining the political outcomes post conflict termination.

All other stakeholders and friends of Nepal were mostly caught in a dilemma about how to engage with the situation in Nepal. The initial trend was that of support to the state to fight against the communist insurgents and provide humanitarian support to the suffering population. But as the insurgency grew, the external actors started to realize that Nepal "might offer an opportunity for conflict resolution success." Similarly, they viewed the insurgency not only as a violent communist movement but as a genuine "political conflict over the nature of Nepal's government and social and political

[232] Lawoti and Pahari, "Assessment of the Maoist Rebellion," 319.

[233] Sitaram Yechuri, chairman of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) made several visits to Nepal between 2006 and 2007 and held dialogues with the leaderships of various political parties to strike a deal between the NCP-M and the SPA.

inequities."[234] Contrary to what the state tried to portray, that the NCP-M was hell-bent on capturing state power through the barrel of a gun, the international community increasingly believed that since a military victory was not possible, a political compromise between the NCP-M and the government of Nepal could be reached. The other challenge the international community faced was that of how to deal with India, because India considered any outside intervention in Nepal to be unwarranted and was categorically against "third party mediation, UN or otherwise."[235]

The Maoists get credit for being able to create the impression that theirs was not a fight for state capture as in the classic Maoist sense but was a way of addressing the genuine grievances of the population. This was achieved in two ways. First, the Maoists, by allowing international organizations to operate in the area under their de facto control, were able to establish a rapport with them and gain a degree of legitimacy. Second, the Maoists were able to divert international attention towards their "most democratic demand of an election for constituent assembly by a party that is waging people's war."[236] The contradiction that a party waging people's war was demanding elections whereas parliamentary parties were against such demands made a huge impression on the international community about the genuineness of the Maoist demands.

One important fact that eludes many is the ability of the NCP-M to project the insurgency as the manifestation of genuine grievances of the Nepalese population and not a sinister design of communist takeover. While it played on the vulnerability of the Indian establishment to its spillover effect, it was able to exploit the international opinion to its advantage during the negotiation phase. Similarly, the involvement of United Nations (UN) in the role of monitoring of the CPA and other subsequent agreements was another measure of success for the NCP-M.

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[234] Teresa Whitfield, "Masala Peacemaking: Nepal's Peace Process and the Contribution of Outsiders," *Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum* (October 2008): 1–9.

[235] Ibid., 9.

[236] Khimlaal Devkota, "National Necessity and the Role of the Party," September 17, 2010. http://khimlal.blogspot.com/2008/10/exclusive-interview-with-intellectuals.html (accessed November 9, 2010).

In summary, the degree and intensity of external involvement and their effectiveness in facilitating the end of armed insurgency in Nepal was motivated by a genuine concern for the human losses and suffering and their changed perception about the nature of the problem and the possibility of a successful resolution. Additionally, the Indian involvement was guided more by their geo-security concerns. It brings the understanding that although the essence remains the same the method of using the "international line of action" proposed by Mao has now changed. The NCP-M demonstrated their ability to grasp the changed nature of the international environment and was able to exploit it to gain similar effect as it would do in classical Maoist sense. This is significant because of the amount of influence exercised by these international agencies in the affairs of the state. The NCP-M had understood that it is important to deal with the international agencies to ensure that even if the insurgents do not gain the sympathy or support, the state also does not gain their sympathy or support.

I. NEGOTIATIONS

Since the NCP-M did not even wait for the deadline it had given the government to expire to declare people's war, it raises the question as to whether the party was serious about any form of negotiation about their demands. Many believe that even if the government had come up with a genuine response, it would not have prevented the NCP-M from declaring people's war. But as the insurgency progressed and situations changed, the party appeared more flexible towards negotiations.

Prachanda did not negate the utility of negotiation as a strategy when he admitted that "our guiding principles on the question of negotiations are the experiences and summation of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and Chunking negotiations under Mao," referring to the incidents where the communists were able to consolidate their power by entering into negotiations.[237] At the same time he also expressed his suspicions about the state using negotiations as a means to "engineer a split in the revolutionary movement," but he asserted that there should be no apprehension about talks that should be in the "defense of

[237] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom Under Seige*, 114.

the basic interests of the people."[238] This demonstrates the attitude of the NCP-M towards political negotiations and armed actions. There is no denying the fact that the NCP-M in Nepal relied heavily upon the actions of its military wing that included performing acts of terrorism during the insurgency, but at the same time, it continued to work for and engage in political negotiations.

As I have alluded earlier, it is important to determine when the insurgents are most genuinely interested in conducting negotiations. Lawoti and Pahari argue against the popular notion that peace settlements are an outcome of "hurting stalemates," because they state that the NCP-M was neither in stalemate nor hurting when it came for the first round of peace negotiations in 2001.[239] The insurgency was able to make significant progress both in extending its political grip across the country and in developing its armed elements because the Army was not yet deployed against them. This is a good example that shows that the NCP-M was not averse to negotiations. But it is still not clear whether they were looking for a political solution or in gaining a degree of public legitimacy. There existed a widespread perception that the NCP-M showed a willingness to seek a political solution through negotiations only to gain a tactical advantage, and ,as it turns out, the negotiations were extensive and many times the parties came close to striking a deal.[240]

The NCP-M was said to have entered into negotiations believing that it could consolidate its political standing mainly for two reasons: first, it would give it legitimacy, and second, it was a timely public relations exercise. By the end of the first negotiations the NCP-M was able to establish itself as the "officially recognized counter-state at par with the government from a group that was seen as desperado." [241] At the same time, the Maoist leaders were able to make their mark upon the general population and intelligentsia. Tactically, they were able to secure the release of many political prisoners and gain time for the armed wing, and strategically, they achieved the status of the

[238] Prachanda, interview by Li Onesto.

[239] Lawoti and Pahari,"Costs and Benefits of the Maoist Rebellion in Nepal," 304–307.

[240] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal,* 149.

[241] Ibid., 152–153.

counterstate by putting their revolutionary ideas openly to the general public. The first round of talks failed because both the NCP-M and the government were so entrenched in their positions that they could not move any further. Nevertheless, the talks gave both sides an opportunity to have a better understanding of each other and also paved the way for the establishment of informal contacts that helped to establish reliable expectations.

The second round of talks began in April 2003 and went on till August, and these talks also failed to yield any substantial outcome. While the Maoists broke from the peace talks citing an incident where 17 of its members were allegedly killed by the Army after capture in Doramba (a place in Eastern Nepal), the deadlock was caused by the refusal of the government to accept the Maoists demand for a constituent assembly.[242] The governments involved in negotiations were not stable and also lacked adequate authority and legitimacy to make concrete decisions. First, because the prime ministers were frequently changed by the King, and second, because they did not have the support of other political parties that were against any agreement that bypassed them. [243] The governments were unable to hold elections and hence lost popular legitimacy and became dependent upon the discretionary authority of the constitutional monarch who held "the power to remove difficulty" according to the constitution of 1990.[244]

While the parties continued their bickering over power sharing, the King became more influential in politics. His rising ambitions ultimately persuaded him to dismiss the prime minister and assume direct rule in April 2005. This move changed the political scenario. It not only facilitated negotiations between the NCP-M and other political parties, but it also alarmed the nations such as the U.S.A., the UK, and India who had so far been supporting the government against the Maoists.[245] Once the political parties decided to get rid of the "autocratic monarchy," a firm alliance between the NCP-M and

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[242] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal,* 156.

[243] Ibid.

[244]Article 127 of the 1990 constitution granted the King the authority to "remove difficulty" under complex constitutional circumstances, and this was later used by the King to justify his direct rule. However, analysts differ as to whether he could exercise the discretion on his own or only on the recommendation of the council of ministers.

[245] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal,* 155.

the political parties took place and led to subsequent developments. At this time it became clear to all, the Maoists, political parties, and external actors, that the changing alignment of forces proved that the "violent line of operation had reached its culmination point" and it was time to resort to the political approach.[246]

The negotiations in Nepal are unique in that while they failed between the insurgents and the state, they produced results when they took place between the insurgents and the parties in opposition. The alliance between the NCP-M and the political parties was based upon the following two fundamental understandings: first, the giving up of violence by the Maoists and the acceptance of a multiparty democracy, and second, an agreement on abolishing the monarchy and the election of a constituent assembly.[247] For any negotiation to succeed there has to be a credible assurance that the parties have adequate authority and legitimacy to implement the agreements.[248] In this case the reinstated parliament and the NCP-M both had such legitimacy and made it possible to implement such decisions. Despite the failure of the negotiations, it is clear that the NCP-M was flexible both tactically and ideologically towards negotiation. It is also clear that the approach taken by the insurgency remained predominantly political towards the end of the insurgency. It was indeed negotiations and the subsequent political agreements that brought an end to the insurgency and not the people's war.

J. PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS AND POPULAR SUPPORT

Electoral participation had never been preferred by revolutionary parties that waged people's war to achieve political change. We observed the outright rejection of elections by the Shining Path in Peru and the similar boycott of parliamentary elections by the CPP in the Philippines. Both of these decisions proved fatal for the movements. The NCP-M, in contrast, exploited the advantage of the democratic electoral practice and

[246] Marks,"Insurgency in Nepal," 34.

[247] Riaz and Basu, *Paradise Lost: State Failure in Nepal*, 160.

[248] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "When Should We Talk to Terrorists," Special Report by United States Institute for Peace, no. 240 (May 2010): 6.

almost succeeded in capturing state power. The NCP-M, unlike other Maoist parties, had not dismissed electoral options either as an ideological deviation or as a form of political strategy.

In the past, the Maoists had also participated in the democratic parliamentary elections. Prominent members of what is now the NCP-M, guided by their "progressive" ideology, had focused their efforts in parliamentary politics by getting elected to the parliament in the early stages of the transition to democracy.[249] In fact, the Unity Center, a predecessor party of the NCP-M, had emerged as the third-largest party after the 1991 elections.[250] The people's war doctrine was thus a late development that possibly was borne out of the frustration of the messy democratic process that was unable to both manage change and rising expectations. Nevertheless, it establishes the facts that Maoists leaders were first, not ideologically averse to electoral politics, second, familiar with the electoral culture of Nepal, and last, may have continued to enjoy a degree of rapport with their respective constituency even during the period of armed struggle. This puts the NCP-M in a uniquely advantageous position as compared to other Maoist insurgencies.

Even the shunning of electoral politics by the Maoist leadership, at least the faction led by Dr. Bhattarai, was in fact a result of his party not being recognized by the election commission during the 1994 midterm elections. This had a serious impact on the way the NCP-M would view electoral politics later on. The UPFN (United Peoples Front, Nepal), led by Dr. Bhattarai when it broke away from the Unity Center, also broke into two factions. One faction was led by Niranjan Vaidya and aligned with Nirmal Lama, and the other faction was led by Dr. Bhattarai.[251] Both the factions went to the national election commission to register, but the commission recognized only the one supported by Nirmal Lama. Dr. Bhattarai responded to this by calling for a boycott of the midterm

[249] Marks, "Insurgency in Nepal," 9.

[250] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," 1.

[251] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom under Seize*, 45.

elections of November 1994.[252] Thus many believe that the election commission slamming the door on the Bhattarai-led UPFN paved the way for its giving up electoral politics in favor of armed revolt.[253]

The NCP-M secured an electoral victory in the 2008 constituent assembly elections by a wide margin against the rival parties. If the election had not been conducted with the combination of the principles of and the proportional representation system (this was on the insistence of the Maoist party itself), the NCP-M would have secured a clear majority in the constituent assembly.[254] Although the international community verified that the elections were largely peaceful, the opposition parties cried foul and accused the Maoists of violence and intimidation.[255] As the International Crisis Group report on the elections pointed out "it was not the cleanest of campaigns … the NCP-M did use intimidation and coercion" but at the same time the report notes that the NCP-M also "exercised great restraint in the face of the possibly calculated killing of fifteen of its activists."[256]

It is, however, worth noting that the Maoists scored a landslide victory in the traditionally urban center of Kathmandu, the capitol city. This meant that the Maoist appeal was more than just simple intimidation. Their win in Kathmandu demonstrated that they did not "profit solely by preying on vulnerable rural voters" but had been able to gain a substantial mobilization of support for their cause.[257] Many people regard this change of heart of the people as a "vote for change."[258] This is indicative of the mood that was created by the prospect of peace and change that captured the imagination of the Nepalese people. Further evidence that the idea of change was being endorsed is the seats

[252] Thapa and Sijapati, *A Kingdom under Seize*, 45.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Lawoti, "Bullets, ballots, and bounty: Maoist Electoral Victory in Nepal," 287–302.

[255] Ibid., 289.

International Crisis Group, "Nepal's Election: A Peaceful Revolution?" *Asia Report*, no. 155 (July 3, 2008): 1–27.

[257] Ibid. 2.

[258] Ibid.

secured by the Terai-based parties and the parties representing indigenous and ethnic parties. The Terai-based party was able to become the fourth largest party in the election.

Although violence and intimidation may have played a part in the victory of the NCP-M, its decision to participate in the election itself was a very bold move considering that it was a Maoist party coming from an armed movement. The fact that people were ready to vote for both "change and peace" supports the argument that a political approach in the end may be the answer to the Maoist quest for legitimate state capture.

K. ANALYSIS OF OVERALL APPROACH

The NCP-M, despite being the largest party in the Constituent Assembly of Nepal, is currently the major opposition party. Although it was able to force the incumbent prime minister to resign through street protests in June 2010, it has failed to garner consensus from other political parties whose support it needs to lead the government again.[259] The NCP-M's failure to convince other political parties is related to its inability to fulfill past commitments about the peace process. Looking at the intransigency of the other major political parties on the issues relating to the NCP-M's commitments and the constitutional obstacles in electing a new prime minister, it is difficult to perceive that it will come back to power without completely disarming and severing its links with its armed group.[260] No matter what the result of the current political stalemate, the NCP-M undoubtedly is a crucial political actor in current Nepalese politics. The NCP-M has in fact reshaped Nepalese politics by successfully creating a counterstate through armed insurgency. It has also forced the establishment to co-opt its major demands and subsequently transformed the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of Nepal. This achievement cannot be understated and is definitely a triumph

[259] Nepal News correspondent, "Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal Resigns," June 30, 2010 http://www.nepalnews.com/main/index.php/news-archive/1-top-story/7218-pm-nepal-announces-his-resignation.html, (accessed May 7, 2010).

[260] Ram Sharan Mahat (Central Committee member of the Nepali Congress party), interview in My Republica "There cannot be a Maoist led government in Nepal unless they give up violence and their armed elements," November 5, 2010 http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=25040 (accessed November 11, 2010).

for the communist movement. It is still possible for the NCP-M to get back in the seat of political power if it continues to demonstrate the same level of flexibility and political approach it so successfully adhered to in the past.

Lawoti and Pahari attribute the success of the NCP-M to the common factors of ideological grounding, dynamic and innovative leadership, and a weak state. However, they also emphasize "Selective employment of violence" and the strong ethnic dynamics that were employed by the party in terms of "developing a relationship with the indigenous groups" for social mobilization.[261] Snellinger credits the "sister (front) organizations" such as student and trade unions with aiding in the mobilization process.[262] Lawoti argues that it was the ability of the NCP-M in "exploiting contradictions and creating opportunities" in the political realm that ultimately propelled the NCP-M to power.[263] They fail, however, to link these factors to the basic approach of the insurgency that served as the lynchpin of these separate components. The political and social mobilization that the NCP-M was able to achieve is a result of the balance that it was able to maintain in response to the changing dynamics of the situation.

In summary, we have observed that the NCP-M exercised Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism only as guiding principles and made regular contextual adjustments to them. Its leadership, mainly Prachanda and Dr. Bhattarai, was successful in sidelining hardliners like Mohan Vaidya within the party in order to adopt timely changes in party policies. The leadership was also able to come up with tangible political goals early on, and because of these goals they regularly participated in negotiations for both tactical and strategic purposes. The NCP-M also practiced the popular front strategy very well and used violence selectively to further its political goals. Furthermore, its extensive involvement in negotiations, alliance formation, and conventional political activity indicates that its primary approach is not predominantly military.

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[261] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," 3–23.

[262] Snellinger, "The Repertoire of Scientific Organization," 24–33.

[263] Lawoti, "Evolution and Growth of the Maoist Insurgency," 11–15.

Even when we calculate the duration of the armed action in which the NCP-M was involved, it is observed that the NCP-M was in the state of ceasefire and negotiations for a combined period of approximately one year (July 2001–November 2001 and January 2003 –August 2003). This is significant considering that the insurgency only lasted 10 years. Similarly, the NCP-M's armed actions against the repressive elements of the state machinery, including the Nepalese Army, accounts for only about four years (January 2001–November 2003 and August 2003–November 2005) before the signing of the 12-point agreement.[264] Thomas A. Marks notes that the NCP-M has emphasized that it favors a political solution to the issues in dispute, which is why it uses nonviolent methods such as participation in legal political activities or negotiations as an adjunct to violence.[265]

This leads to the conclusion that the common Maoist model, strategy, and means applied by the Nepalese, Peruvian, and Filipino communist insurgencies helped them to initiate, develop, and organize the insurgency. However, the success or failure of each one was dependent upon the approach it ultimately took when given critical political opportunities. This implies that if insurgents wish to lead not only successful military operations but also achieve political goals, they must retain strategic flexibility (including the possibility of engaging in the political process). The ultimate choice of means, either military or political, appears to be the primary difference between these relatively similar Maoist insurgencies that reached such different outcomes.

[264] Lawoti and Pahari, "Nepal Maoist Insurgency Timeline," 328–342.

[265] Thomas A. Marks and David Scott Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics: Comparing Peru and Nepal," *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement,* 13, no. 2 (Autumn 2005): 91–116.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The findings of the comparative case study support the argument that communist insurgencies can develop and succeed even in the post-Cold War era. These movements are typically led by educated and ambitious elites who, through their "revolutionary voluntarism," are able to combine the effect of existing socioeconomic and political grievances with the charm of a radical ideology that provides the masses with a relatively credible alternative to the state.[266] Lawoti agrees with the idea but comments that although violent communist movements are possible, the insurgents may have to be "ultra strategic, co-opting ethnic issues and constantly changing tracks" implying that ideological shifts and political co-option are a minus.[267] I argue that this very freedom from a dogmatic application of ideology and retention of strategic flexibility is exactly the prerequisite needed for the success of a twenty-first century insurgency, as shown by the outcome of the Shining Path and the CPP/NPA in comparison to the insurgency in Nepal.

Similarly, it proves that even in the current global environment, the protracted people's war remains a workable, efficient strategy of social mobilization, even though it requires some modifications. The "war" component of the insurgency can propel the movement to a position where it can claim to be a viable counterstate and challenge the state's political legitimacy. Military success also depends upon various contextual features like the strength of the state in terms of the capability of its security apparatus for repression, the comparative level of active popular support, and the degree of both domestic and international legitimacy. The NCP-M built and consolidated a counterstate in Nepal during the first five years of the insurgency solely on the foundation of military action before they finally participated in the negotiations of 2001 posing as an alternative state. Unlike the other insurgencies, which wanted to execute a Chinese, Russian, or

[266] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics," 95.

[267] Lawoti, "Assessment of the Maoist Rebellion," 321.

Cuban model of revolution based solely upon military might, the NCP-M was able to see that an outright military victory in the current geopolitical and security context was nearly impossible.

This leads to an idea that both insurgents and counterinsurgents need to recognize. Neither the idealized utopian models of past revolutions nor the past successful counterinsurgency strategies can be made operational exactly as they were in the past in a new context and timeframe. The geography of Nepal neither provides vast land areas such as though found in China to conduct and develop base areas nor does it contain a huge land mass of peasants. Furthermore, support for democracy, the global war on terrorism, and the growing influence of economic globalization add more obstacles to insurgency. This argument may appear to be simplistic, but, as the cases have shown, both insurgents and counterinsurgents commit the same mistakes again and again. Because the Shining Path could not foresee the decline in its popular support due to its violent tactics and the CPP/NPA could not reconcile itself with the idea of a pragmatic ideological shift; both met failure as a result. Similarly, the states of Peru, the Philippines, and Nepal all, at least initially, sought a military solution to the problem and were reluctant to implement far-reaching changes. The Nepalese case demonstrates that if "substantive reforms are not carried out incrementally in politics, major transformations could occur through violent rebellion," which could be very costly.[268]

These cases also highlight the extent of both the utility and limitations of a militarist strategy for Maoist insurgency movements in the twenty-first century. The utility of the militarist strategy is primarily in launching the movement and in sustaining it. It also allows for the development of a counterstate politically and also strengthens the insurgents bargaining position. On the other hand, if the the militarist strategy is pursued for a longer period of time, it tends to negatively affect the degree of popular support and results in a loss of legitimacy and results in criminalization of the movement. Most importantly, it is not able to create a complete victory.

[268] Lawoti, "Assessment of the Maoist Rebellion," 321.

Consequently, a political approach is needed in the insurgency at later stages to lead to a path of negotiation and compromise. This highlights the importance of continuous negotiations even if there are no immediate breakthroughs. The strategies of negotiation, demands for co-option and accommodation, and political participation as a way to end insurgencies rarely get the level of academic attention they deserve. It may be due to the widespread skepticism about the ultimate aims of Maoist insurgents based upon the classical Maoist thoughts about the utility of negotiations. But, as the Nepalese case has shown, it is possible to identify when the insurgents are sincere about a negotiated settlement. The first step that will lead to the possibility of fruitful negotiations is that insurgent demands are tangible and realistic. Neither the Shining Path's nor the CPP/NPA's demands were as explicit and realistic as the NCP-M's. The clarity of goals and demands of the insurgents is the key to the possibility of achieving them. Negotiations in this type of situation become the ultimate "means," if not the only means, for an insurgency to achieve a degree of political success. Additionally, third-party mediation can make the state recognize that, even if drastically transformative, the legitimate demands of the insurgents must be addressed and can produce successful outcomes. The addition of an influential third party and willingness of the state to address the issues raised by the insurgents do not appear in the case of the Philippines.

However, a negotiated settlement may not always lead to cooperation between political forces and stalemates can occur. The incumbent elites may feel defeated because of their inability to maintain the status quo, and the insurgents may feel that their revolution is incomplete. The NCP-M in Nepal is currently struggling to get back into power because of a lack of cooperation from other major political parties. There are two major issues of contention currently. One is the lack of consensus on the management of Maoist combatants and the other is the power sharing in the government followed by major debate on the nature of the political system. The NCP-M advocates a presidential form of government, and the other political parties propose a parliamentary form of government. I would argue that this stalemate is a product of the frustration of the major political parties because they feel that they have conceded too much to the Maoists. Likewise, the NCP-M feels frustrated because of its perception of having conducted an

incomplete revolution. Similarly, Lawoti argues that while the NCP-M has clearly achieved a political revolution, it has fallen short of a complete sociocultural revolution, and has failed to achieve an economic revolution.[269] Nevertheless, it is clear from the case of Nepal that major transformative sociopolitical and cultural changes are possible through negotiated settlements. As a result of the NCP-M's struggle, in less than 20 years (1990–2008) Nepal has been transformed from the world's only Hindu Kingdom, ruled by an absolute monarchy, into a secular, federal republic.

In the current globalized world where the idea of state sovereignty is increasingly challenged, there is a definite role for external actors, such as the regional powers and the international community in bringing about an end to conflicts and even in shaping the outcome of conflicts. This is because of the current environment where violent insurgencies tend to threaten not only regional security but also compromise global democratic spread and economic interests. This constrains the insurgents in many ways and helps the state. But if the insurgents are able to convincingly demonstrate that their demands truly represent genuine grievances existing in the society that need addressing and their willingness to peacefully negotiate then they can exploit external actors. Marks and Palmer comment that the royal coup in Nepal led to a deepening crisis within the state in regards to its ability to counter the rise of a counterstate. When simultaneous shifts in both state and counterstate were facilitated by external actors who feared either a complete state collapse or a Maoist takeover, they facilitated a middle path that ultimately suited the NCP-M.[270] While neither the Shining Path nor the CPP/NPA accepted foreign mediation, the NCP-M openly and deliberately used Indian mediation (both establishment and CPI-M) in favor of abolishing the monarchy. India gave up its long-held concept of maintaining twin pillars of stability in Nepal, a constitutional monarchy and democracy, for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Similarly, many western nations found the demands of the NCP-M for the election of a constituent assembly to be appealing. This is one of the most democratic exercises coming from an insurgent communist party.

[269] Lawoti, "Assessment of the Maoist Rebellion," 321–322.

[270] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics," 96.

In the end, a comparison of the three insurgencies reveals that Maoist insurgencies that rely heavily upon the military approach by ignoring the political aspect are more likely to end up in failure. The Communist insurgents of the twenty-first century cannot depend solely upon the military-dominant classical Maoist approach because of the current dynamics of the war on terror and widespread support for democratic forms of governance. Current regional and global environments are also not conducive to pursuing a classic people's war because of the involvement of nonstate actors such as human rights and civil liberty groups and business enterprises that share a common ideal of rejection of violence as a form of dissent. Thus I argue that there is a need for a balanced politico-military approach for an insurgency to succeed in the current global context. Strategically, terrorist tactics in a weak state can be tremendous in tipping the balance for success or failure. [271] Selective violence/ terrorism during a crucial time period as a part of strategic pressure may still be useful. However, indiscriminate terror such as employed by the Shining Path will be counterproductive. Selective violence/terrorism during a crucial time period as part of strategic pressure is still useful and will remain so. Violence, as NCP-M demonstrated, must be used within a specific scheme for it to have the desired effect.

The NCP-M in Nepal is living proof that an insurgent party need not fear the democratic processes. What they need to ensure is that they participate in political competitions at the right time with the right agendas and people will be willing to give them a chance. The right agenda indicates the methods for addressing the genuine grievances, and these are the foundations on which the movements are raised. It is also historically true of the people that they tend to vote in favor of the rebels who effected the political change. The Nepali congress party that led the popular movement against the absolute monarchy in 1990 garnered a majority in the parliament in the ensuing election. It is also argued that the Nepali voters believed that only by voting the Maoists to power could the people keep the party from returning to violence.[272]

[271] Marks and Palmer, "Radical Maoist Insurgents and Terrorist Tactics," 96.

[272] Lawoti, "Assessment of the Maoist Rebellion," 307.

The counter-insurgent state needs to understand the limitations of traditional counterinsurgency methods that aim to defeat the insurgents. Once an insurgency develops it is very difficult to completely suppress them. Maoist insurgencies in particular, under this notion of protracted warfare, continue their armed struggles even after the organizations have disintegrated. Take for example Burma, Thailand, the Philippines, Columbia, Peru, and India where the insurgents have resurrected their organizations and kept up the fight even after facing severe blows. The basic conclusion is that Maoist insurgencies are usually prepared to go on for a long period of time despite the unconducive nature of the domestic or international situation they face. Hence the idea of political co-option and accommodation must receive priority in government policies

Governments aiming to defeat insurgency tend to either adopt a development approach that emphasize economic development in the affected areas to address socio-economic grievances or a military approach to fight them with security forces. The approach of developing the economy often becomes ineffective: first, because security and development are inextricably linked with each other, and second, because the struggle for authority between the state and insurgents over control of the economic communities puts them between a rock and a hard place. The second approach uses professional and effective military operations against the insurgents to force them to come to the negotiating table. This works as long as the state forces are professional, selective, and efficient, but that is rarely the case in most of the insurgencies. A third option is the accommodative strategy, which is to selectively accept the demands of the insurgency and co-opt them into the mainstream democratic political forum. I argue that a combination of all three is required in parallel or in sequence, but that the ultimate emphasis has to be on co-option and accommodation. This is primarily a political approach that also aims to draw from the advantageous situation created by the first two strategies, and it remains the only viable long-term solution for termination of a conflict.

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